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President: Ms. Al-Khalifa (Bahrain)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 8 (continued)

General debate

The President: I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Gilles Noghès, chairman of the delegation of the Principality of Monaco.

Mr. Noghès (Monaco) (spoke in French): Few women before you, Madam, have been elected to the presidency of the General Assembly, despite the fact that, as the Chinese proverb states, women hold up half the sky. We are delighted by your election and congratulate you and your country, Bahrain. Our congratulations go also to the Group of Asian States, which, happily, put your name forward. You can rest assured that our delegation will always be ready to support you as you carry out you lofty and challenging task.

We would also like to congratulate your predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Jan Eliasson, on having so successfully guided the work of the General Assembly during the previous session, as well as for his understanding of the capacity of Member States to overcome their differences. Because of his perseverance, the majority of the reforms resulting from the commitments entered into at the 2005 World Summit have been implemented.

At the beginning of this debate we heard Mr. Kofi Annan present his report on the work of the

Organization (A/61/1) for the last time. He clearly set out for us his beliefs and accomplishments and his recommendations for strengthening the United Nations. My delegation associates itself with the numerous tributes paid to the Secretary-General. We also wish to convey to him our profound gratitude for his courageous efforts over the past 10 years. Thanks to the extensive experience he acquired at the Organization, he was able to move the United Nations forward — in an environment fraught with threats and new challenges — to meet the expectations aroused as a result of the upheavals caused by globalization. His clear vision made it possible to establish the existence of the nexus between peace, development and human rights — Charter principles that have repeatedly underpinned our common efforts.

Guided by the watchful motivation of His Serene Highness Prince Albert II, the Government of Monaco has worked to increase its contribution to development and international cooperation through a significant increase in official development assistance (ODA). In that connection, cooperation credits have increased by 30 per cent in 2006. The Principality will continue its efforts to expeditiously reach the goals set and reaffirmed last year at this very rostrum by H's Serene Highness the Sovereign Prince.

The advancement of women, improving child and maternal health and the alleviation of poverty are among the Principality's priorities on the international sphere. The Sovereign Prince and his sisters, Princess Caroline of Hanover and Princess Stéphanie of

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Monaco, are greatly involved in development efforts intended to help the most destitute. In her capacity as a goodwill ambassador for the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, Her Royal Highness the Princess of Hanover is helping to promote programmes to educate girls and women. Part of that effort includes a project undertaken by Monaco, Andorra, Cyprus, Luxembourg and San Marino on the theme of human rights and education in combating poverty and promoting the independence of girls and women.

As President of the World Association of Children's Friends, the Princess has long led an ongoing struggle to protect children. On the recent occasion of being honoured by UNICEF-USA, the Princess of Hanover stated that "today we are at war against terror, especially against the terror in the eyes, hearts and spirits of millions of children around the world".

This session will provide impetus to the effort to promote and protect the rights of children with next October's publication of a study by the independent expert Paulo Pinheiro, to which the Principality is proud to have contributed. Let us not forget that, as Jean-Paul Sartre wrote, violence, regardless of what form it takes, constitutes a failure.

We hope that, following the Security Council's debates on the protection of children in armed conflict, the effective implementation of Council resolution 1620 (2005) will lead to progress in this area of such concern. It is unacceptable in human terms for the perpetrators of such crimes to go unpunished.

During her presence here last June to attend the High-level Meeting on HIV/AIDS, Princess Stéphanie of Monaco expressed her solidarity with all those fighting the disease or otherwise affected. Through her Fight AIDS Monaco association, the Princess is working to promote prevention, research and assistance to those affected by the virus — especially sero-positive people, who are often victims of discrimination. In that regard, the Princess has expressed the wish that the dignity of every sero-positive person be respected. Her association will support the establishment of an entity to provide psychological support for those ill with the disease in an African country where many non-governmental organizations from Monaco have already carried out development efforts.

The upcoming appointment of Princess Stéphanie as a special representative of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) will further strengthen her commitment to the fight against this terrible pandemic, which is increasingly affecting more and more women. To address that situation, the Government of Monaco has decided that, in addition to the support it provides to UNAIDS, it will begin this year to finance a United Nations Population Fund project in Africa focusing mainly on sero-positive women suffering from extreme poverty and psychological distress and providing them with medical, psychological and social assistance.

Our heads of State or Government resolved to take action when they accepted the responsibility to protect. It is of course up to individual States to protect their populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. But when such tragic events cannot be prevented, it falls to the international community, working through the United Nations, to be prepared to immediately provide assistance to victims of such acts.

Whether a catastrophe is natural or man-made, it is crucial that we be able to meet the most pressing needs of civilian populations. In that regard, we would like to commend the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator and his Office for their ongoing efforts, especially as regards the restructuring of the Central Emergency Response Fund. Monaco is a contributor to the Fund and intends to continue its efforts to provide financing for humanitarian assistance during the years to come.

Before the end of this year, His Serene Highness Prince Albert II will once again visit the fishing village of Sirombu on Nias Island, Indonesia, which has twice been struck by natural disaster: first by a tidal wave in December 2004 and, a few months later, by an earthquake. The village has been rebuilt thanks to the effective and generous action of the Monaco-Asia Association.

As the Sovereign Prince announced that it would during the 2005 World Summit (see A/60/PV.6), Monaco ratified the Kyoto Protocol last February.

Our head of State has a personal and ongoing commitment to protecting the environment. That commitment was recently evidenced in the polar expedition he undertook 100 years after the one made

by his great-great grandfather, Prince Albert I, a pioneer of modern oceanography. Having reached the North Pole with his team on 16 April 2006, following four days on an arduous course on dog sleds from the Russian base of Barneo, Prince Albert II launched an urgent appeal regarding the dangers of global warming, unfortunately in evidence in the Arctic in the significant shrinking of the ice shelf. Back in Monaco, His Serene Highness established a foundation devoted to environmental preservation and sustainable development that will serve as a permanent source of dynamic and innovative efforts in the areas of climate change, biodiversity loss and water resources. The Principality is also pleased to have been elected to the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development. We hope to contribute to improving the United Nations environmental machinery.

The Principality of Monaco believes that there is a need to establish and strengthen dialogue among civilizations in order to prevent conflict. We support all efforts aimed at actively promoting a culture of peace and mutual respect among the world's various creeds, cultures and languages. As Secretary-General Kofi Annan stated in 1999, "The greater the appreciation of diversity, the deeper the sense of identity and the sounder the enlargement of the common denominator of values" (A/54/546, para. 13).

It is in that spirit that Monaco, aware of the universal value of sport as one of the best tools to establish inter-cultural dialogue, fully supports the United Nations Action Plan on Sport for Development and Peace.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Mahe Tupouniua, chairman of the delegation of the Kingdom of Tonga.

Mr. Tupouniua (Tonga): The Tongan delegation joins others in congratulating you, Madam, on your assumption of the presidency of the General Assembly. Let us reassure you of Tonga's full support and its confidence that the sixty-first session of the General Assembly will be productive and successful under your very able leadership. Full recognition is also in order for the excellent work of your predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Jan Eliasson, during the sixtieth session of the General Assembly. In the same vein, the Tongan delegation takes this opportunity to commend and extend its gratitude to the outgoing Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan, for his tireless service

over the past 10 years in the stewardship of the Organization.

It has been a year since our leaders met at the historic World Summit in an effort to embrace the realities of the world we live in and to duly reflect those challenges in the work of the Organization. We are pleased that there are specific landmarks that attest to the fact that some progress has been made in the implementation of the 2005 Outcome Document (resolution 60/1). They include the inauguration of the Peacebuilding Commission, coupled with the establishment of the Peacebuilding Support Office and the Peacebuilding Fund; the creation of the Human Rights Council; and the establishment of the Central Emergency Response Fund.

Mr. Chidyausiku (Zimbabwe), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Tonga also welcomes the adoption of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (resolution 60/288), which forms a basis upon which we can build our consistent and unequivocal condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations — committed by whomever, whenever and for whatever purpose — for terrorism constitutes one of the most serious threats to international peace and security. We look forward to the effective implementation of the Strategy, as well as to the conclusion of a comprehensive convention on international terrorism during the sixty-first session of the General Assembly.

Tonga also remains committed to supporting the work of the Counter-Terrorism Committee. We duly recognize the efforts undertaken to consolidate States' reporting requirements. We also wish to acknowledge the cooperation provided by bilateral, regional and multilateral agencies in helping to fulfil international and regional commitments to combat transnational organized crime and to fight terrorism.

Tonga shares the call for the full restoration of the role of the General Assembly as the main decision-making, representative and policy-making body of the United Nations, in accordance with the provisions of the Charter. That would further enhance the credibility of multilateralism and the important need to address the multifaceted and interconnected challenges and threats confronting the world.

Tonga supports the work pertaining to the remainder of the reform mandates, especially as

regards Secretariat and management reforms, the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council and the strengthening and streamlining of management in the Organization.

The important issue of the reform of the Security Council still remains unresolved, although world leaders acknowledged that it was an essential element of our overall effort. Tonga supports the call by the Secretary-General in his annual report (A/61/1) to find common ground for action on this fundamental piece of overall United Nations reform, as well as his urging that a decision on Council reform be taken sooner rather than later in order to ensure that the United Nations machinery to promote the establishment and maintenance of peace and security will remain relevant and credible to meet today's and tomorrow's challenges. Tonga continues to support Japan's assumption of its proper and permanent place in any enhanced Council.

Tonga commends the contributions of United Nations peacekeepers in fulfilling the Organization's vital role in helping parties in conflict to end hostilities. To the degree that it is able, Tonga is committed to supporting both international and regional peacekeeping efforts, including the current Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands.

For many island developing countries, including my own, the development agenda remains a top priority. In that regard, the theme of the sixty-first session of the General Assembly, "Implementing a global partnership for development", is not only very pertinent but also very timely. While we reiterate that we take primary responsibility for our own development, we continue to welcome as a necessary step the maintenance and enhancement of support at the regional and international levels to complement our national efforts. That includes the support provided under the Pacific Plan to strengthen regional cooperation and integration, which was endorsed by Pacific leaders in 2005, as well as the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States.

Tonga looks forward to progress in the work to enhance mechanisms to promote coherent United Nations support to small island developing States through a strengthened inter-agency consultative

process, the finalization of a strategy for resource mobilization and the promotion of partnership initiatives.

In May of this year, His Majesty's Government ratified its Strategic Development Plan 8, entitled "Looking to the future, building on the past", which sets out the Government's road map for the Kingdom's future development path for the period 2006-2007 to 2008-2009. The document was formulated following a lengthy and extensive process of consultation with all of the relevant stakeholders. It provides due recognition to the fact that the success of the implementation of the Development Plan will require the efforts of both State and non-State actors.

The President of the General Assembly has rightly observed that the recent historic High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development revealed the potential and opportunities that globalization presents as a force for improving the lives of millions of people. The meeting provided Tonga, a mature migration-remittance economy, with the opportunity to showcase the important nexus between migration and development.

A study recently produced by the World Bank concluded that, for Tonga, recipient household migration and remittances have positive impacts on migrant-sending countries through improved income distribution and poverty alleviation, induced higher savings and stimulated business activities, resulting in larger investments in education. The study also highlighted that improved and restricted, but organized, labour mobility can significantly contribute to a country's gross domestic product and to overall global income. Labour mobility is therefore a potential vehicle for achieving our commitment to pro-poor strategies such as the Millennium Development Goals and other commitments, and also for achieving national sustainable development strategies.

The suspension of the Doha round of trade talks was disappointing. The failure to conclude the talks will negatively affect global economic prospects and the growth of low-income countries, including Tonga. We join others in urging World Trade Organization member countries to maintain their commitment to the rules-based multilateral trading system, preserve progress that has been achieved and to continue with the negotiations. We also continue to urge the donor community to move forward with the delivery of aid

for trade, independent of the Doha round. Regional cooperation on trade-related projects has the potential to promote the competitiveness of low-income countries, such as the island economies of the Pacific.

In October 2005, Tonga's Legislative Assembly passed a motion to establish a National Committee of the Kingdom of Tonga on Political Reform. With the support of His Majesty's Government, the Committee chaired by His Late Royal Highness Prince Tu'ipelehake has completed public meetings and consultations throughout Tonga as well as in the countries where the majority of Tongans reside, namely, New Zealand, Australia and the United States of America. It is anticipated that the report will be deliberated upon by the Legislative Assembly during its 2006 session and by His Majesty's Government with a view to attaining an appropriate political reform agenda that is not only responsive but also responsible for fulfilling the objectives of building national unity and promoting the social and economic advancement of the people of Tonga.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Léo Mérorès, Chairman of the delegation of Republic of Haiti.

Mr. Mérorès (Haiti) (*spoke in French*): I am honoured to address the Assembly on behalf of the Government and people of Haiti. Allow me, first, to offer my heartfelt congratulations to Ms. Haya Rashed Al-Khalifa on her election to the presidency of the General Assembly in its sixty-first session. I am convinced that her wealth of legal training, her profound knowledge of public affairs, her national and international career and her keen negotiating skills mean that this session will be a success. Allow me to reiterate to the President the full support of my country and of the Haitian delegation in discharging her lofty tasks.

I wish also to congratulate Ambassador Jan Eliasson, whose practical spirit, his sense of compromise and great know-how, meant that the sixtieth session was a successful one. I wish him every success in his new job as his country's Minister for Foreign Affairs.

I wish to convey to the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan, sincere thanks for the skill with which he has conducted the Organization over the past 10 years. I congratulate him also on his continued commitment to my country. The people of Haiti is

profoundly grateful to him for his subtlety and determination demonstrated in the quest for viable lasting solutions to the long crisis that has beset my country in recent years. Mr. Annan deserves the full appreciation of the international community for his laudable, indefatigable efforts for peace, justice, human rights, democracy and development.

On 3 July 2006, the Republic of Haiti regained its seat in the Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM), thus putting an end to an absence of two long years. We recognize that during this period our brothers and sisters in the Caribbean never lost interest in Haiti's affairs. Quite the contrary: they were strongly committed to finding appropriate solutions, which have allowed my country today to have the honour to participate side by side with them in the great debates concerning the region. On 11 September, Haiti finally rejoined the great family of the Non-Aligned Movement, whose purpose is to strengthen South-South cooperation. This was most welcome. Those two events clearly show that we want to be open to the world.

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome the accession of the Republic of Montenegro to political sovereignty and to the great family of our Organization.

Today, more than ever before, our world is facing manifold threats that imperil its very existence. Despite the Organization's intensive efforts to make the world more human and more liveable, the spectre of major pandemics, poverty, hunger, organized crime, terrorism, armed conflict, civil war and natural disasters continues to haunt us. We therefore need to redouble our efforts to refine our diplomatic approaches and to give priority to dialogue, honest, open negotiations, flexibility and compromise. Those principles lie at the very basis of the creation of the United Nations and reaffirm its strength and its *raison d'être*. Our Organization remains the ideal forum, the reference point for finding appropriate solutions to the problems that beset our world. Nothing should make us abandon that spirit.

The Republic of Haiti unreservedly supports all of the international community's initiatives to resolve conflicts in Africa, in East Asia and in the Middle East by finding peaceful negotiated solutions respectful of the sovereignty of States.

Terrorism is today assuming apocalyptic proportions. The attacks of 11 September 2001 against targets in the United States and subsequent attacks elsewhere in the world were wake-up calls to us, forcing us to silence our petty interests in order to face this scourge which, unless it is swiftly curbed, will lead to catastrophes with untold consequences. We cannot make mistakes and we cannot hesitate. Recently, we have been impotent, as we witness an infernal cycle of violence, massive destruction of innocent human lives and property. We are seeing attempts to annihilate our institutions and our society. The very future of humanity seems to be taken hostage by unbridled groups that stop at nothing to destroy wherever they can. The Republic of Haiti reaffirms once more its resolve to fight terrorism in all its forms, using the few resources that it has. It supports the preventive measures taken against terrorism, measures taken in a legal context. We encourage States to agree on a global convention on terrorism based on a clear definition acceptable to all.

Haiti welcomes the major steps taken to reform the United Nations at the previous session. We are still far from our goals, but some very significant progress has, nonetheless, been made. We hope that the changes decided on will continue to give our Organization the resources it needs to carry out its global vocation. We must adapt to new requirements, as we reaffirmed at the World Summit of 2005. Accordingly, I applaud the creation of the Peacebuilding Commission. It should play an important part and its purpose is political stability, creating sustainable foundations for socioeconomic development in post-conflict situations, as well as to help strengthen democratic institutions and make them effective in a constitutional framework and under the rule of law.

Similarly, I also welcome General Assembly resolution 60/251, which created the Human Rights Council. I congratulate the 47 members of the Council, who were elected in May in order to put their experience to use in promoting and protecting human rights. I hope that this new body will, in many respects, help to develop our society, to make it more open to dialogue, understanding, mutual respect, social justice and tolerance.

Haiti also welcomes the creation of the Central Emergency Relief Fund. It will provide upfront resources to enable the United Nations to finance

humanitarian relief operations, as soon as a catastrophe occurs, in other words, to do more, faster.

My Government agrees with the idea of revitalizing the Economic and Social Council. As one of the main organs of the Organization, it should be more involved in development activities in countries that have been sidelined by history, especially the least developed countries (LDCs). It should provide greater cohesion in adopting the best approach for attaining the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The question of harmonizing strategies and actions among the entities of the United Nations system that work in the area of development is, for us, a crucial one.

Through the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti of the Economic and Social Council, my country enjoys the support of the Council and, recently, at the high-level substantive meeting held in Geneva last July, the Council extended the mandate of that group through July 2007, with the possibility of being renewed once more. I welcome the idea that this extension will enable various sectors involved in the sustained development of Haiti to achieve tangible results for my country.

Since 1945, date of the creation of the United Nations, of which my country was a founding Member, the international landscape has undergone profound change. However, after more than sixty years, the institutional framework of the Security Council has remained the same. Any reform of the Organization would, therefore, be incomplete were it not to include a reorganization of the Security Council. The composition of the Security Council must, therefore, reflect the realities of the twenty-first century and include Member States that are capable of shouldering responsibilities of area of the maintenance of international peace and security. In this new desirable configuration, it is crucial that developing countries from Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean enjoy equitable representation.

In February 2006, Haiti held historic, fair and democratic elections. This process will be completed at the end of the year by municipal elections and territorial elections, which will help restore democracy and open the way to political stability. The people of Haiti as a whole decided in favour of change capable of giving it security and improved living conditions. I welcome the activities of the international community for the support and assistance it gave and has continued

to give to Haiti. I salute the Group of Friends of Haiti and all Members of the Organization that have spared no effort or sacrifice to support the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) by providing it with military or police personnel.

I also welcome the adoption of Security Council resolution 1702 (2006) of 15 August 2006, which renewed the mandate of MINUSTAH. I hope that this mission, which is doing a very difficult job — sometimes a dangerous, but noble job — will, together with the national police of Haiti and the Government, manage to control the wanton insecurity that is besetting Haitian society. I therefore call upon the mission to work closely with the Haitian authorities to make the necessary changes depending on the priorities of the moment.

I hope that international assistance will also focus on reforming the judicial system, on the professionalization of the police and on strengthening democratic institutions, such as the parliament, municipal bodies and the territorial collectives.

To the parents, friends and colleagues of peacemakers who died in Haiti in the line of duty, I would like to reiterate the pain and sorrow of our Government and the Haitian people, who recognize the importance of the United Nations presence in Haiti, the ultimate goal of which is to help the country to recover its stability.

The new team that the head of State of Haiti, Mr. René Garcia Préval, has the privilege of leading since he assumed office in May, has embarked on the long-term task of rebuilding the country. The task is to restore security, to build a modern State, to strengthen democratic institutions and to offer favourable conditions for investment in order to create wealth that benefits everybody. In order to attract investors and create conditions that favour sustainable development, the implementation of basic infrastructure projects is imperative, e.g., the building of roads, ports, airports, providing electricity to the main towns of the country, improving telecommunications networks, all of which requires the support of the international community.

Lack of security is a fertile ground for all kinds of temptation. It favours destabilizing elements that exploit the subhuman conditions under which a large number of our poor live, by arming them to sow death and destruction in the Haitian family, thus imperilling the very future of our Republic. Attacking this lack of

security and the climate of violence marked by dramatic kidnappings and deadly clashes between armed gangs and the police is one of the top priorities of my Government. Dialogue, on the one hand, and toughness, on the other hand, are necessary in finding a viable solution to banditry, which in recent times has been spreading in the country, causing a flight of capital as well as a brain drain. Accordingly, the technical and financial support of the international community is therefore essential in the effective implementation of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme. We are aware that Haiti is not a classic case, but that does not mean that we should do nothing.

In order to provide speedy relief to the sufferings of the masses and to reduce, even eliminate, the sources of gang recruitment, my Government has launched a social pacification programme. This programme provides for the establishment of a database of more than 300 projects and actions in various sectors of our national life and throughout the territory. It will help create labour-intensive jobs and will enable the State to reduce unemployment, to guarantee some relief and thereby to reduce wrongdoing.

Moreover, in order to create a climate conducive to good governance our head of State initiated an open, honest dialogue with all political sectors upon his election to the presidency. They understood the urgency and responded positively to the invitation by agreeing to participate in the current outward-looking Government, which includes members of various political parties, which are also represented in parliament. The point is to achieve social cohesion and political reconciliation, which are essential for stability, security, economic recovery and the rebuilding of an inclusive society.

The international conference for the economic and social development of Haiti, which was held in Port-au-Prince on 25 July 2006, produced promises of financial commitment by the international community. My Government intends to carry out a long-term development plan. That attests to our strong commitment to take control of the destiny of the country, and that of our international partners to respect the priorities defined by the Government.

In order to facilitate the task of the Government to create the necessary conditions for true economic

and social development, I call upon donors to live up to their promises and to support Haiti in the long term. Financial aid from the international community will facilitate the consolidation of democracy and will help us to establish the basis for sustainable development. In order to attain those results and to strengthen its credibility, the Government is determined to comply with the requirements of good governance, to ease the poverty of the disadvantaged and to continue the ceaseless fight against insecurity and corruption in order to facilitate private national and foreign investment.

In conclusion, I would note that the Government of Haiti is counting on the active cooperation of the international community to assist it in its quest for peace and socio-economic development. Throughout the general debate and listening to the statements made by our many friends from CARICOM, the Americas and all over the world, Haiti has been aware of the keen desire of our partners to work side by side with Haiti in order to meet the challenges faced by our Government. Here, I wish to express the gratitude of the Government of Haiti. Haiti is faced with a daunting challenge, but there is no lack of political will. My country will — with our Organization and with all of us working together — attain our goals.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency, Mr. Jérémie Bonnelame, Chairman of the delegation of the Republic of Seychelles.

Mr. Bonnelame (Seychelles) (*spoke in French*): I wish to begin by extending my congratulations to Ms. Haya Rashed Al-Khalifa on her election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-first session. I also express my country's high regard for her predecessor, Mr. Jan Eliasson, who succeeded in spurring the implementation of United Nations reform.

I also pay tribute to the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, for his work at the head of our Organization, as reflected in the body of his achievements at the end of his two terms of office. Those achievements include the ongoing reform, the promotion of multilateralism, the prevention of armed conflict, peacekeeping and humanitarian assistance operations, the fight against HIV/AIDS and action on other fronts, in particular in combating poverty and terrorism.

Here I would like to briefly discuss United Nations reform. I echo the sentiments of all who have

referred here to the pressing need for the United Nations to adapt to the realities of the world in which we live so that it will be more in tune with current concerns and managed in an effective and transparent manner: an Organization whose Charter recognizes that all States, small and large, possess the right to have their say in the conduct of affairs that are of interest to the international community.

Seychelles thus supported the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Human Rights Council, the adoption of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and the resolution on development. We await with great interest the outcome of the ongoing reform of the Economic and Social Council and the Secretariat and its management, and of the revitalization of the General Assembly in keeping with its great authority and enhanced role.

We hope that the General Assembly will take an active part in the appointment of the next Secretary-General, who, we all agree, should be from Asia and with proven qualities and demonstrated leadership. Moreover, the reform of the Security Council is of particular importance in the light of the current challenges to world peace and to the Council's institutional legitimacy.

Now, let me say a few words on the national policy of Seychelles. My country recently held elections in a climate of tranquillity and social harmony. Following the election of President Michel, and on the basis of the new road map that he has drawn for his administration, Seychelles will place even greater emphasis on ensuring sustainable development in all sectors: economic, social, cultural and environmental. The policies seek to guarantee the best possible standard of living for all citizens.

Opening up the economy, respecting human rights and the rule of law and pursuing the objectives of good governance will continue to define the actions of our Government. However, we must note that, as the World Bank and the Commonwealth have highlighted in their joint report, over the past five years small developing States have seen gross national product growth rates decline in comparison to those of large, low-income and middle-income countries. Small States have also experienced an increasingly burdensome foreign debt. Concerning access to foreign capital, there is a trend in private markets to consider small

States to be of high risk, which leads to increased costs that complicate access to those markets.

In recent years, meetings have been held, resolutions have been adopted and statements have been made followed by further meetings, but with little concrete action and without any satisfactory response to our concerns. Seychelles regrets that. The global community is made up of 192 States, and more than 80 of them are small States.

Confronted by these structural development problems in the context of a globalized economy, small States rarely have the means and the capacity to respond appropriately to them. In that connection, the appeal made by the President of the General Assembly for a global development partnership has never been so urgent and critical. The Seychelles hopes that at its sixty-first session the Assembly will take a decisive step forward in bringing about such a partnership.

I should like to conclude my statement by referring to the issues of regional and world peace. Armed conflicts are occurring at a pace that shows that, contrary to our hopes, the world remains unstable and dangerous. Unfortunately, peace and ceasefire agreements do not always lead to a cessation of hostilities. Civilian populations, composed mostly of women and children, continue to be displaced, maltreated and, too often, the victims of crimes and massacres. The situation in Darfur is the most tragic illustration. Those who survive do not always have access to humanitarian aid. Today, according to a United Nations report, even the level of violence facing humanitarian aid teams is unprecedented.

We are all aware of the real causes of wars. Sadly, sometimes the only way to reach a consensus is to say nothing; as the saying goes, diplomacy consists of conversations between friends, and only rarely with the enemy. That is why the Seychelles joins all those in Africa, the Middle East, Asia and everywhere else who hope for a more human, more just and freer world where peace is the rule, not the exception, and not a privilege but a right. That also applies to those countries — such as Palestine and Western Sahara — that hope someday to be able to conduct their affairs as they see fit, in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions.

Finally, I should like to reaffirm the support of the Seychelles for the work undertaken by the

President of the General Assembly to make the sixty-first session an instrument for peace and development.

The Acting President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Enele Sosene Sopoaga, chairman of the delegation of Tuvalu.

Mr. Sopoaga (Tuvalu): Everything has been said; everything has been noted. But while it may be true that many boats will rise with the tide, others are bound to sink unless goodwill prevails in this house. Tuvalu wishes to add its voice of solidarity to the work of the United Nations and to what has been a highly enlightening debate.

First, we join wholeheartedly in the high commendations already expressed with regard to the election of Her Excellency Sheikha Haya Rashed Al-Khalifa as President of the General Assembly and her Bureau, and the sterling efforts of the outgoing President. Ms. Al-Khalifa and her Bureau have our full cooperation. We also wish to join others before us in paying tribute to the work of the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan. His initiatives on development, security and human rights have taken the United Nations ever closer to all peoples and have made the Organization accessible even to small island States such as Tuvalu. In appreciation, we wish him well and all the best in the future.

For my small island nation, joining the United Nations at the dawn of the new century is an expression of hope. Our hope is that, through the noble ideals and principles of this great body, Tuvalu, despite its physical remoteness and insignificance, will be allowed to paddle its canoe in harmony along with super-tankers and to share the common future of a world of larger freedom: a world in which every State, regardless of its size, is recognized in terms of its sovereignty, its independence and the human rights of its people.

We continue to hold fast to that hope. But, in the present world of interdependence, where great opportunities are accompanied by great challenges, the need for collective action and multilateral cooperation has never been so pressing and urgent. Victory over those challenges can be won not through political fragmentation, finger-pointing and confrontation, but through cooperation.

The showdown of words engaged in by some countries in this Chamber is unfortunate. We must

never forget that along with wealth and power comes responsibility towards others. The risk is high that this House of humanity will fall apart for lack of responsibility and leadership. There is a call for everyone to consistently display the highest degree of morality, solidarity and respect for one other's values and concerns. Otherwise, the ideals of the United Nations cannot be served. As a small, peace-loving nation, Tuvalu strongly believes that engaging in open dialogue and working together in a spirit of mutual understanding within United Nations frameworks is the only way to reach our shared destiny in diversity and with respect for one another.

Tuvalu takes pride in having been part of the United Nations during the negotiations on its reform and development agenda. The adoption and establishment of the Human Rights Council and the Peacebuilding Commission and of major innovations in the Secretariat show the benefit of working together. Those bodies must be supported to ensure peace and the protection of the human rights of all peoples and communities. But our work will remain unfinished until we make the Security Council and its operational methodologies truly representative of the United Nations membership. To that end, we support the draft resolution of the Group of Four countries on expansion of the Security Council.

The President returned to the Chair.

Development, security and human rights are the cardinal purposes of the United Nations. The fulfilment of those purposes demands that we shoulder our collective responsibility and engage in united action. The successful conclusion of the World Summit last year was a reaffirmation of our resolve to fight poverty and ensure sustainable development through the internationally agreed Millennium Development Goals, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States.

But devising plans without having access to adequate resources is akin to presenting a menu to hungry people: it may be mouth-watering, but without the necessary ingredients, the dishes it describes will remain unattainable. It is essential that we fully implement the Mauritius Strategy by integrating it into the work programmes of the Commission on Sustainable Development, United Nations agencies,

conventions — especially the Rio Conventions — and bilateral cooperation partners. Additionally, the strengthening of the coordination capacity of the Department of Social and Economic Affairs with adequate resources in those areas is imperative.

Two weeks ago, in this very Hall, the General Assembly undertook the midterm review of the Brussels Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries. We, as both a least developed country and a small island developing State, are grateful to the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States for his dedicated work, and to the development partners for the support Tuvalu has enjoyed over the years.

It is certainly our view, however, that it is unrealistic and premature to list for graduation Tuvalu and our Pacific least developed country colleagues that are also small island developing States. We feel strongly that, before any graduation can be recommended, thorough consideration should be given to our unique economic vulnerabilities and that this should be done on an in-country basis, not merely through data analysis carried out at a desk halfway around the globe. For these very reasons, and with a view to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, there is a critical need to ensure a United Nations presence in all Pacific small island developing States.

Last month a new Government was elected to power in Tuvalu and has pledged good governance and media freedom as its guiding principles. It has adopted the Tuvalu Sustainable Development Strategy, known as "Te Kakeega II: Vision 2015", as its framework for development partnerships and looks forward to working with the rest of the world in its implementation.

Security challenges continue to create havoc, fear and uncertainty worldwide. Tuvalu strongly deplores terrorism in all its forms and expressions. We in the Pacific are not immune from acts of terrorism. We must therefore collectively continue to make the strongest efforts in our campaign against these forces and be resolute in ensuring effective global anti-terrorism action.

We also encourage the continuing role of the United Nations in working towards a solution to the Palestinian question and in ensuring peace for the

people of Afghanistan, Darfur, Timor-Leste and other regions.

Clearly the United Nations has done well in preventing and resolving deadly conflicts throughout the world. But despite those achievements, the non-representation of Taiwan in the United Nations and its agencies remains an issue of great concern. The threats posed by China's deployment of missiles aimed at Taiwan and the use of force in the Taiwan Strait are real, for the East Asian and Pacific region and for the world as a whole. We urge that immediate peaceful and preventive actions be taken in the Taiwan Strait for the sake of all.

No other challenge to global security is more serious and threatening than the impact of climate change. Climate change is a global problem and can be resolved only through global collective action. Addressing climate change must therefore be placed at the centre of the work of the United Nations. As is well known, small island developing States like Tuvalu are extremely vulnerable to the impact of climate change and sea-level rise, and already evidence of devastation is prevalent in all regions of the small island developing States. Over the past few years, Tuvalu has witnessed unusual flooding of the main islands with seawater and king tides, as well as severe attacks on fresh water, vegetation, foreshores and coral reefs.

We are frightened and very worried by all these things, which are the result of the actions of others. If nothing is done urgently and we are forced out of our islands, there is no other Tuvalu to which to move. There is still time to act. Once again we appeal to this body for help and for real action.

We strongly believe that we have reached a dangerous level of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere and that urgent action is required to accelerate the necessary responses. The options are available; what is clearly lacking is political will. Unless climate change is addressed, all our efforts for development, security and protection of human rights will be severely undermined.

Clearly it is urgent that the international community take more aggressive action to reduce greenhouse gases. All countries, industrialized and developing, must do their part, with the industrialized countries taking the lead, including through the full implementation of the Kyoto Protocol.

To help developing countries contribute in a committed way, we need stronger incentives to promote the development and distribution of renewable energy and energy efficiency technologies. We need a global fund to support such efforts.

It is disappointing to see some large industrialized countries' continued denial and the absence of enough political will on their part to support vulnerable countries such as small island developing States to adapt to the impacts of climate change. We must recognize the "polluter pays" principle and ensure that the countries that are producing the greenhouse gas emissions pay for the damage they are causing to the vulnerable countries.

There is also a need to generate considerably more funds to underwrite the costs of adaptation, including international levies to generate income to boost funding for adaptation and insurance in small island developing States. The mainstreaming of the Mauritius Strategy into the work of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, as required under resolution 59/311, is crucial in that regard.

Defining the way forward with respect to future commitments and actions in the area of climate change will require strong political will on the part of all countries. The upcoming twelfth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Climate Change Convention and the second meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol, to be held in Nairobi, must come up with clear and practical timetables for accelerated action on mitigation and adaptation. It is imperative also to improve access by small island developing States and least developed countries to Global Environment Facility climate-change resources and convention-related funds. The Nairobi meetings must also decide on governance and management arrangements for the Kyoto Protocol Adaptation Fund to facilitate its early operation.

Finally, we strongly believe that the General Assembly should host, as soon as possible, a summit at the level of heads of Government aimed at bringing forward workable proposals with strong, high-level political endorsement so as to address climate change beyond the year 2012.

Our call for urgent action on climate change is not self-serving. Tuvalu and the small island developing States may be the first to suffer from the

impacts of climate change, but the consequences of not taking real action now will be felt by all around the globe. We all must work together on climate change in a spirit of strong solidarity.

The people of Tuvalu have full confidence in the United Nations and in its ability to ensure the achievement by all peoples of its cardinal purposes of development, security and human rights. It cannot fail the world on climate change; it cannot dash our hopes. Please do not let Tuvalu sink.

God bless the United Nations family. God bless Tuvalu.

The President: I give the floor to Mr. Phesheya Mbongeyi Dlamini, chairman of the delegation of Swaziland.

Mr. Dlamini (Swaziland): It is a great honour and privilege for me to deliver this important statement on behalf of the delegation of the Kingdom of Swaziland. Allow me to convey the warm greetings and best wishes of His Majesty King Mswati III, Her Majesty the Queen Mother, the Government and the people of the Kingdom of Swaziland to the whole United Nations family.

The Kingdom of Swaziland warmly congratulates you, Madam, on your historic election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-first session. We are confident that your wide experience and proven legal and diplomatic skills will ensure success in addressing the challenging and daunting issues that face the Assembly at this session. We would also like to commend the excellent work of your predecessor, Mr. Jan Eliasson, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden, in particular for his skilful leadership and the great effort he put into directing the General Assembly at its previous session.

The Kingdom of Swaziland would like to pay special tribute to Mr. Kofi Annan for his outstanding work during his tenure as our Secretary-General. Through his untiring and dedicated efforts, he demonstrated the vision and qualities that saw him successfully lead our Organization into the twenty-first century, despite the daunting challenges that the Organization faced. We also commend him for his initiatives in contributing to the economic and social development of the African continent through the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The Kingdom of Swaziland is delighted to extend a warm welcome to our Organization's newest Member, the Republic of Montenegro, whose accession is a further confirmation of respect for the principles of universality and representation enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

However, as we welcome our new Member, we remain conscious of the fact that the principle of universality has not been applied to its fullest. I am referring to the exclusion of Taiwan. With the admission of Montenegro, almost all the countries of the world have become Members of this global Organization, all except one — Taiwan. The exclusion of this nation poses a legal and a moral challenge to the international community. The time has come for the United Nations to stop enforcing a policy of exclusion against the 23.6 million people of Taiwan. The Kingdom of Swaziland believes that accepting Taiwan as a member of the United Nations would not only restore the rights of the people of that island but would also contribute to ensuring that peace and stability is maintained in the Taiwan Strait. We believe that every country in that region should be allowed to participate in working towards peace, stability and positive development. We propose, therefore, that General Assembly resolution 2758 (XXVI) of 1971 be reviewed carefully, with a view to restoring the legal and moral rights of the people of Taiwan to be part of the United Nations family.

The Kingdom of Swaziland joins the world in condemning terrorism and threats to international peace and security. We condemn all acts of terrorism that have taken place over the past year and we offer our sympathies and prayers to all those who were affected by such acts, especially the families and friends of those who lost their lives. The world has, in recent times, seen an upsurge of terrorism on an unprecedented level.

We welcome the recent agreement on a counter-terrorism strategy, which demonstrates the commitment of the international community to overcome the scourge of terrorism. It must be borne in mind that all States, large and small, and in every region, are vulnerable and could be affected by terrorism. Therefore, all Member States have to ensure that the strategy is implemented and further updated in order to confront the evolving challenges.

We fully support the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty and call for the elimination of all nuclear weapons by those States that possess them. As part of our commitment to a peaceful world, we support the efforts of the Conference on Disarmament concerning the prohibition of the development and manufacture of new types of weapons of mass destruction. We also continue to be part of the campaign against the trafficking, sale and distribution of small arms and light weapons. Such weapons encourage terrorism on an international as well as on an individual level.

The Kingdom of Swaziland welcomes the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission, and we look forward to the realization of the goals envisaged in the formation of that body. We are also proud to congratulate a sister State, the Republic of Angola, on her election to be the first to preside over this important and unique Commission.

The recent tragic events that took place in Lebanon and northern Israel are a cause for great concern and a challenge to the Peacebuilding Commission. The Kingdom of Swaziland stands firmly behind the collective effort of the international community to ensure the implementation of the Security Council resolution that ended the conflict between Israel and Hizbollah. We are of the view that a comprehensive peace process must be revived as a matter of urgency.

While we are especially encouraged by the developments towards peace on the African continent, we remain concerned about the worsening security situation in Darfur in western Sudan, where thousands of people have been killed and more than 2 million displaced since the conflict erupted in 2003. We urge the parties concerned to demonstrate a spirit of necessary compromise and to cooperate with efforts made to facilitate the search for peaceful and lasting solutions. The Kingdom of Swaziland supports unequivocally every effort that is being made to sustain peace in this area. We join our fellow Member States in calling for support from the United Nations. We fully hope and expect that commitments in words will be followed up by deeds.

We welcome the results of the historic first-round elections that took place in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the first of its kind in 40 years. These elections were the first crucial step towards the recovery of that

country, and we support every effort by the United Nations and the international community to consolidate this achievement, bearing in mind that it will make a difference not only to the Democratic Republic of Congo but to the African continent as a whole.

The recently established Human Rights Council has just concluded a successful inaugural session. The Kingdom of Swaziland welcomes the creation of this historic new body. The creation of the Council was indeed a step in the right direction towards strengthening our Organization's human rights tools. We believe that the work of the Council will be guided by the principles of universality, impartiality, objectivity, non-selectivity, international dialogue and cooperation. In this regard, we align ourselves with the rest of Africa in supporting a less-politicized body that will respond promptly to cases of human rights abuses in any part of the world.

The Kingdom of Swaziland believes that the ongoing reforms of the United Nations are essential, especially if the Organization is to retain its global credibility. It is therefore our hope that the many key reform proposals that were deferred to this session will be dealt with satisfactorily. Meanwhile, we welcome the progress that has been made so far, including the establishment of a United Nations Ethics Office, the Peacebuilding Commission and the Human Rights Council.

Neither renewal nor reform would be complete without the reform of the Security Council. In the quest for an overall agreement on this issue, the Kingdom of Swaziland supports the position of the Non-Aligned Movement and the African Group concerning the composition and working methods of the Security Council. We hope and expect that positive results will flow from the conclusion of this matter.

As a Member State of this body, we recognize the vital role that the major United Nations conferences and summits have played in identifying commonly agreed objectives which should lead to the successful implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). However, we do realize that nothing can be achieved without adequate funding, especially for developing nations. Even though promises have been made, the time has come for them to be translated into actions.

The breakdown and suspension of negotiations of the World Trade Organization's Doha Round is

lamentable. However, insofar as the outcome is concerned, the Kingdom of Swaziland believes that the needs of developing nations must be fully taken into consideration. Failure to do so will undermine the already limited trade opportunities of these nations and detract from the pursuit of policies in key areas, such as employment, industrialization, food security, rural development and sustained economic growth.

While we welcome the relevant ideas and general principles for designing microeconomic, sectoral and trade policies contained in the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development's Trade Development Report of 2006, we still believe that the specific needs of developing nations have to be addressed.

On a more domestic note, let me report that the HIV/AIDS pandemic continues to be one of the biggest challenges faced by the Kingdom of Swaziland. As we begin to realize the benefits of a full-scale national roll-out of antiretroviral drugs, a critical area of concern is the care needed by the estimated 63,000 children who have been orphaned by the pandemic.

That is why, among many other structures we have put in place to curb this scourge, we have revived the concept of the "KaGogo", which means, literally, "grandmother's house". These KaGogo centres are being constructed across the country and are a new initiative based on traditional ways that empower local communities to look after their orphans within traditional structures. During the High-level Conference on HIV/AIDS held in June 2006, His Majesty King Mswati III clearly spelled out the scale of the pandemic and how it is taking its toll on our nation. It is indeed our greatest challenge.

The Kingdom of Swaziland fully supports the Political Declaration that was adopted at the High-level Conference, and we are confident that this renewed commitment will strengthen the global response to the pandemic. Thus, we realize the urgency of combining our efforts to ensure that the rate of infection decreases and that greater access to treatment and care for those who are already living with the virus is achieved. We fully support the efforts of such organizations as the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), especially in terms of minimizing the threat of HIV to young people. We believe that that is a moral obligation and is essential for halting the escalation of the infection rate. In this regard, we look

forward to working closely with United Nations agencies in order to alleviate the situation.

On a more positive note, the Kingdom of Swaziland is now implementing the recommendations of our job creation summit, which took place last year. His Majesty King Mswati III always stands behind his people and fully supports the idea of the participation of the people in building the economy. For instance, he encourages them to start their own businesses as a means of reducing the unemployment level. However, we still face significant challenges, e.g., market fluctuations in certain products such as sugar and textiles. We also encourage our people to enter into partnerships and join ventures with foreign direct investors in order to develop our nation.

In conclusion, allow me to allude to the fact that there is indeed much vital work to be completed during this sixty-first session of the General Assembly. The Kingdom of Swaziland is confident that the initiatives already taken will lead to the renewal of our Organization, and we look forward to a new dynamic and vibrant working period. We are indebted to the United Nations for all we have received and achieved over the years towards the development of our nation.

I am, therefore, charged by His Majesty The King, Her Majesty The Queen Mother, the Government and the people of the Kingdom of Swaziland with proclaiming the renewal of our commitment to the Charter of the United Nations. We ask for God's blessings upon those charged with leading the Organization to give them the wisdom and direction they require to carry out these tasks on behalf of all the peoples of the world.

The President: I now give the floor to Mr. Negash Kebret Batora, chairman of the delegation of Ethiopia.

Mr. Kebret Batora (Ethiopia): Allow me to extend to you, Madam President, our sincere congratulations on your assumption of the Presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-first session and to express our full confidence in your ability to guide the session successfully.

Let me also express our appreciation to your predecessor, Mr. Jan Eliasson, for his leadership during the sixtieth session.

My delegation's appreciation also goes to the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, for his selfless

commitment and devotion to the objectives of the United Nations, in general, and for his contributions, through various initiatives, to the efforts of reforming our Organization and for his dedication to their practical implementation, in particular.

In our view, one of the key accomplishments of the international community in recent years is the agreement on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). It is imperative that we all commit to building stronger partnerships to achieve these noble goals and targets. In this regard, we are cognizant of the fact that each country is responsible for its development. It should also be equally recognized that, for those countries at the early stage of economic development, there is a need for stronger support from the international community if they are to meet the MDGs.

For low-income countries, there is nothing more important than a partnership that is predictable, consistent and based on mutual obligations defined in advance. The long-awaited opening up of international trade, especially through the elimination of agricultural subsidies, should also be expedited.

On our part, we have intensified our efforts to improve the socio-economic conditions of Ethiopia. Today, in the decade and a half since the dictatorship was swept out of our country, our socio-economic progress has been substantial. We have succeeded in channelling our limited resources into capacity-building and infrastructure programmes serving the entire country. We have opened up new universities and technical institutions of higher learning, expanded primary health-care services and built roads, airports, power plants, transmission and telecommunication facilities and services, among others. As attractive opportunities have become more apparent, domestic and foreign investment has grown.

In this regard, I would like to highlight some of the achievements recorded so far. In the past three fiscal years, the Ethiopian economy has grown by an average of 9.5 per cent annually. Over the same period, our export trade has grown by 28.5 per cent per annum. Our primary school enrolment ratio has increased to 89 per cent from a mere 30 per cent in the early 1990s. In order to strengthen our capacity for development, we are building 13 public universities. In two to three years, when these universities are fully operational, the total annual intake of public universities would

increase from the current 30,000 to 150,000 students. Similar results have also been achieved in the health sector, where the Government is equally determined to enable rural people in Ethiopia to have adequate access to basic health care by 2010.

Benefiting from the encouraging results of the first five year plan and the experience gained in its implementation, the second five year plan, namely, the Programme for Accelerated and Sustained Development to End Poverty, was drawn up on a much wider and enhanced scale. The main objective of this latest plan is to alleviate poverty by ensuring food security and meeting the MDGs.

As it carries out its development agenda, Ethiopia strongly believes that the prevalence of peace and security in the country and its region is an absolute necessity. For this reason, Ethiopia will not allow its dispute with Eritrea to distract it from its focus on development, although that has been the main objective of Eritrea since the conflict began eight years ago. For the last four years, Eritrea has been blaming Ethiopia for its own aggression against us and for the current stalemate in the peace and demarcation process. In fact, now, the whole world is being blamed for Eritrea's own failure and for its inability to behave like a normal State.

For the benefit of this Assembly, it would be fitting to place the conflict in the proper context and perspective for a better appreciation of the current impasse in the peace process. It should be recalled that Eritrea launched an unprovoked attack against Ethiopia in May 1998 in blatant disregard of international law, thereby igniting the war and leading to the present crisis. In this respect, I wish to draw the Assembly's attention to the decision of the Eritrea-Ethiopia Claims Commission regarding issues of liability in the war between the two countries.

In its decision, the Commission set forth, *inter alia*, the following conclusions. First, Eritrea is liable for committing unprovoked aggression against Ethiopia. The Commission stated that Eritrea violated Article 2, paragraph 4, of the Charter of the United Nations on 12 May 1998 and the days immediately following when it resorted to armed force in attacking and occupying areas peacefully administered by Ethiopia. Secondly, Eritrea is liable to compensate Ethiopia for the damages caused by that violation of international law. Thirdly, the Commission rejected

Eritrea's argument that its recourse to force was justified, because some of the territory question was territory to which Eritrea had a claim.

The Commission's decision shows not only Eritrea's warped understanding of international law but unambiguously confirms that Eritrea's illegal act constituted aggression.

Before Eritrea launched its aggression and during the war and after, Ethiopia has shown its strong desire and willingness to resolve the conflict with Eritrea by peaceful means. It should be recalled that, in order to create conditions for a sustainable peace and in order to re-establish all-around cooperation between the two countries, Ethiopia presented a five-point peace plan, which the international community, including the Security Council, had welcomed. However, the proposal was flatly rejected by Eritrea.

We have also cooperated fully with the Secretary-General's Special Envoy. Furthermore, Ethiopia has welcomed the peace initiative presented by the Witnesses to the Algiers Agreement, which is supported by the Security Council and made the following proposals. The current impasse should be resolved with the assistance of a neutral facilitator in the demarcation process. Freedom of operations by the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) should be restored, together with the sanctity of the Temporary Security Zone. The threat or use of force should be eliminated. There should be normalization of relations between the two countries. In this connection, I would like to assure the international community that we shall continue to persevere in our search for a lasting peace.

Ethiopia has on various occasions expressed its readiness to demarcate the boundary, through dialogue, in accordance with the decision of the Boundary Commission, and has attended in good faith the meetings convened by the Commission. It has also reaffirmed its readiness to normalize its relations with Eritrea. Ethiopia has done so not because it is desperate for closer relations with Eritrea, but rather because normalization is critical for durable peace. But Eritrea will have none of this. Why? Because Eritrea's strategic goal is neither peace nor a peaceful common boundary. What it wants is interminable boundary problems with Ethiopia.

The latest report of the Secretary-General on Ethiopia and Eritrea, of 19 September (S/2006/749),

and the report of the Boundary Commission annexed to it clearly indicate that the Commission's June and August meetings were cancelled because Eritrea refused to attend. Eritrea has also issued ultimatums as a condition for its cooperation with the Boundary Commission. I wish to underline here that Eritrea has no reason to be frustrated by the lack of the speedy implementation of demarcation. Eritrea is the reason why the boundary between the two countries has still not been demarcated.

Eritrea's illegal and anti-peace stance is not limited to issuing ultimatums. It has blatantly violated the Algiers Agreement by threatening the use of force and has violated the integrity of the Temporary Security Zone by deploying its armed forces there. It has tightened its blatant restrictions on the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) and its personnel. The Secretary-General has reported time and again that Eritrea has not only prohibited the Mission from carrying out its mandated tasks, but also engaged in a series of arrests and detentions of its personnel. Those are naked violations of the Algiers Agreement, Security Council resolutions and the Charter.

The way forward to break the current impasse in the peace process is very clear. Eritrea needs to abide by the relevant Security Council resolutions and the Algiers Agreement, withdraw its armed forces from the Temporary Security Zone and restore the Zone's integrity and UNMEE's freedom of operation. It must demonstrate its compliance with article 1 of the December 2000 Agreement by renouncing the use of force to resolve the dispute between the two countries. It should cooperate with the international community in its efforts aimed at resolving the dispute peacefully and through dialogue. Only when Eritrea decides to cooperate with those legal measures will we be able to begin to resolve the dispute in accordance with international law.

Eritrea should behave as a responsible State and resolve any dispute through diplomatic means. Eritrea must understand that that is its only option. Its continued, dangerous tactic of using brinkmanship against many actors in the international community is not acceptable.

Ethiopia shares a border of more than 2,000 kilometres with neighbouring Somalia and is home to about 3.5 million Ethiopian Somalis. It is in the

interests of Ethiopia that peace, stability and national harmony prevail in that country. It is precisely for that reason that we have spared no effort over the past 15 years — working together with partners in the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the African Union (AU) — to help the Somalis to achieve peace and national reconciliation.

The Transitional Federal Government of Somalia is the product of the efforts made by Somalis themselves, with the support of IGAD countries, the AU and the international community in general. That Government is now facing a major challenge from those who have ambitions that have nothing to do with Somalia but everything to do with chaos, instability and terror. The international community would do itself a great disservice if it failed to appreciate the implications of what is currently happening in Somalia and did not respond in an appropriate manner.

Somalia is being dragged into the abyss by those who are using religion as a cover to deny the people of Somalia peace and the opportunity to revive a nation that has been in a state of collapse for 15 years now, making it possible for those who have no interest in peace and stability to thrive. The latest opportunistic move in this regard was made by Eritrea, but it is bound to fail. IGAD and the AU are asking for political and diplomatic support so that the Transitional Federal Government can be in a position to contain those who are the agents not of love, but of disharmony — not of peace, but of war. That is not too much to ask of the international community.

Only when the Transitional Federal Government is in a position to protect itself from the internal and external enemies of peace will dialogue provide a solution to the crisis in Somalia — a crisis that the extremists within the Islamic Courts Union hope will engulf the whole region. It is precisely for that reason that the partial lifting of the arms embargo is so critical. There are those who want to wish away the danger in Somalia. There are, on the other hand, those who want to benefit from the danger. It is obvious that the latter group, to which Eritrea belongs, is taking advantage of the naivety of the former.

There should be no doubt that Ethiopia will continue to be a pillar of peace and stability in the Horn of Africa. That is Ethiopia's vocation, whether with respect to the problem in Somalia or in connection with the difficulty we have in ensuring that Eritrea

chooses the peaceful path. Resort to force is never a basis for sustainable peace. That is the philosophy that underpins our policy towards Eritrea and towards the crisis in Somalia. There is no better guarantee for peace and stability than the nurturing of mutual confidence and trust, regardless of differences in outlook or in political or other values. This also explains Ethiopia's legendary commitment to the United Nations and to its principles and purposes. As I conclude, therefore, I would like to reaffirm Ethiopia's devotion to the United Nations and to the values of interdependence, which the Organization embodies.

The President: I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Martin Belinga-Eboutou, chairman of the delegation of Cameroon.

Mr. Belinga-Eboutou (Cameroon) (*spoke in French*): I should like, on behalf of my delegation, to say how delighted we are to see you, Madam, the representative of the Kingdom of Bahrain, a friendly country, presiding over the General Assembly at its sixty-first session. I would like to assure you of our sincere wishes for your success. You can rest assured that my delegation will fully cooperate with you.

I would also like to pay tribute to the Kingdom of Sweden, a friendly country whose Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Jan Eliasson, presided over the General Assembly at its sixtieth session in such an outstanding manner. Major progress was made during that session.

Finally, I should like to extend to Montenegro a warm welcome to the family of the peoples of the United Nations.

This session of the General Assembly is taking place at a time when the world is once again facing major challenges. I am thinking in particular of the upsurge of terrorism, which threatens the security of States and our collective security. I am also thinking of the persistence of underdevelopment and the almost endemic poverty in the countries of the South. I am thinking, too, of pandemics of all kinds, including HIV/AIDS. Finally, I am thinking of cross-border organized crime.

Our world and our Organization need more generosity, more solidarity, more ethical behaviour and more tolerance, but also more courage and more imagination to tackle these challenges, which require a global approach in the multilateral context in which the United Nations is the forum par excellence.

Opinions are being expressed in various quarters deploring the inability of the Organization to respond adequately to the fundamental aspirations of the world's people, while some also believe that the Organization has become obsolete. Cameroon would like to reaffirm that it believes that, despite the inevitable shortcomings inherent in an organization of such size, the United Nations is today, more than ever before, the only institution that can bring about consensus in an effort to ease tension and find solutions. Very simply put, there is no substitute for the United Nations in managing in a coherent manner the problems to which I have referred.

In that regard, I would like to pay special tribute to the work of Secretary-General Kofi Annan. I also wish to convey to him the gratitude of my country and my personal regard and appreciation for his efforts. Following in the footsteps of his predecessors, he has reinvigorated multilateralism in an especially difficult international environment. Cameroon is proud to have contributed to the election of this noble son of Africa following its assumption of the chairmanship of the Organization of Africa Unity. Today, while peace to many seems to be but a myth, Africa is truly honoured that Mr. Kofi Annan has taken his place among the world's great peacemakers. In that regard, the Noble Peace Prize awarded to him was richly deserved.

In an international environment characterized by difficulties in ensuring that the rule of law prevails over the use of force, the Secretary-General was courageously able to promote the voice of reason. In an environment of heated passions, he succeeded in delivering a message of peace and brotherhood. Allow me, by way example in that regard, to refer to his unequivocal commitment to Cameroon and Nigeria — two brotherly countries linked by history and geography — in the peaceful and consensual implementation of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruling of 10 October 2002 finally resolving the border dispute between our two countries.

The Greentree Agreement of 12 June 2006, implemented following the withdrawal of all Nigerian troops on 14 August 2006, is a credit both to the United Nations and the personal commitment of the Secretary-General. I would like to take this opportunity to thank friendly countries, including the Federal Republic of Germany, the United States of America, France and the United Kingdom. Along with the United Nations, those countries agreed to provide their moral and political

support to the Greentree Agreement, which defined the modalities for the implementation of the ICJ ruling of 10 October 2002 on the Bakassi Peninsula. More importantly, they agreed to help us to implement it.

I would also like to reaffirm here and now Cameroon's solemn commitment to continue to fulfil in good faith all its obligations emanating from the International Court of Justice decision and the Greentree Agreement. In particular, I would like to affirm that Nigerian nationals living in Bakassi desiring to remain there will be treated in the same way as the 4.5 million Nigerians living in Cameroon, who are able to live their lives in peace and harmony with Cameroonians.

That process has taught us that true lasting peace can never be imposed; it can only be established through patience and a spirit of compromise. In short, real lasting peace can only come from genuine joint political will.

Allow me to highlight some of the many initiatives undertaken by the United Nations that reflect the geopolitical developments under way and the aspirations of people around the world. In that regard, I would specifically like to refer to the Millennium Declaration, which is a genuine charter of international solidarity binding on all of us as an urgent obligation. In addition, the Organization's ongoing attention to Africa is prominently reflected in the Secretary-General's report on sustainable development and the causes of conflict in Africa, a document that will be an ongoing source of encouragement to our countries.

I also wish to recall that the Secretary-General laid the foundations for the reform of the Organization, which was made necessary in the light of the changes that have taken place in the world's balance of power since the founding of United Nations. I should therefore now like to say a few words about what has come to be known as United Nations reform.

The Organization stands no chance of maintaining its place in world affairs unless it safeguards its legitimacy. In other words, it must ensure that its representative character is beyond reproach. The reform we seek should therefore take into account the development of the international system in the course of recent decades. Likewise, it will no doubt be necessary to modify the role played by some organs of the United Nations system. In that

connection, I am thinking in particular of the role of the International Court of Justice. It is in everyone's interest that the reform be properly carried out while taking into account today's realities. But however reform is carried out, I believe that Africa should have permanent representation in the Security Council. That is not just a matter of justice, but also one of common sense.

In order to retain its credibility, the Organization should resolutely continue to pursue its efforts with regard to major issues related to peace and development in the developing world. On the political level, special attention should be paid to the Middle East, Darfur and the issue of nuclear proliferation. With regard to development, the Millennium Development Goals should be attained within a reasonable time frame.

In order to avert doubts as to the positive aspects of trade globalization, the United Nations likewise has a responsibility to maintain a balance between the countries of the North and the South in such major trade negotiations as the now-suspended Doha Round. Failure in that regard would have disastrous consequences for Africa.

Finally, our Organization must continue to safeguard the cultural identity of the various peoples of the world and to promote a dialogue among cultures and religions. The sharing of experiences and the knowledge gained through such an honest and respectful dialogue will be the best antidote to the clash of civilizations that some predict as well as a sure alternative to terrorism and violence.

Over the years, the United Nations has become a crucial stakeholder in the international arena. I believe we should all welcome that development because, first of all, this parliament of nations is the only forum in which virtually all peoples are represented and where a blueprint for international democracy is gradually being drafted. We should welcome it also because — and this is an important point — the systematic consideration by our Organization of crises or tensions gives negotiation a chance and makes the use of force less likely. True, it has not just been success stories, but I think that, broadly speaking, the balance sheet is quite positive. This should prompt us not to begrudge the United Nations our trust and to give it means commensurate with its ambitions, its responsibilities and the expectations we have of it.

For its part, Cameroon will continue to support all the initiatives of our Organization aimed at maintaining peace and solidarity among peoples. I need hardly say that the human person must remain paramount among our concerns. This, *inter alia*, will be the task facing the new Human Rights Council, of which my country is honoured to be a member.

Our Organization cannot remain indifferent to the tragedy of the massive migration flows that we have been witnessing for some time. Clearly this situation poses a challenge not only to our States but also to the entire international community, and we must all work together to strengthen cooperation in this area between the countries of the North and the countries of the South.

I believe that, appearances to the contrary — and although many hotbeds of tension and threat still remain — the international community seems to be moving towards greater stability. Credit, to a large extent, goes to the work done by the United Nations, its various organs and its staff, who are carrying out their responsibilities in conditions that are often difficult, even dangerous.

That is the substance of the message of Mr. Paul Biya, President of the Republic of Cameroon, to the General Assembly at its sixty-first session.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in the general debate.

(spoke in Arabic)

The general debate of the General Assembly at its sixty-first session has now concluded. I thank all speakers for their valuable contributions.

The annual general debate provides a unique opportunity for world leaders to meet and exchange views on the most pressing global issues and challenges. While there may not be agreement on all matters on our agenda, we share a common belief in the merit of dialogue and international cooperation. For such a dialogue to be fruitful, we all agree that values such as mutual respect, tolerance and understanding should guide our work and deliberations.

Over the past two weeks, we have had a rich and substantive debate. It will not be possible for me to summarize all the points made, but let me mention a few issues addressed by representatives.

The General Assembly is the main body and plays a key role in deliberating and making policies. It represents all States Members of the United Nations. The theme of this year's general debate was "Implementing a global partnership for development", and I am pleased that so many heads of State and Government highlighted that issue in their statements.

This year there was a clear message that we need to redouble our efforts to make progress towards achieving internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, and address the deadlock in the international trade negotiations. Many representatives stressed the need to move ahead to eradicate extreme poverty, particularly in the light of the trend reversals we are witnessing in Africa. Some also underlined the need to explore creative methods of funding the development programmes, including contributions from the private sector.

Representatives also expressed a strong commitment to continue the follow-up and implementation of the reform agenda adopted at the World Summit last September. They commended the achievements made at the sixtieth session, including the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission, the Human Rights Council and the Central Emergency Response Fund, and they expressed their will to enable these new organs and institutions to work effectively and live up to their potential.

They reaffirmed the role of the United Nations in fighting the scourge of terrorism and welcomed the adoption of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. They emphasized the need to take this work forward, both by implementing the Strategy and by concluding negotiations on a comprehensive convention on international terrorism.

On institutional reforms, representatives made it clear that they would like to see further progress on Secretariat and management reform, including mandate review; Security Council reform; strengthening of the Economic and Social Council; and General Assembly revitalization.

In addition, they expressed the wish that the United Nations assume a more proactive role in both the prevention and resolution of armed conflicts. They underlined in particular the importance of reaching a just and lasting solution to the Middle East crisis, and

expressed the absolute need to resolve the situation in Darfur.

They called on the United Nations to take the lead in the prevention of ethnic cleansing, mass killings and genocide. Furthermore, many representatives stressed the need to regain momentum in our work in the areas of disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation.

Other fundamental global challenges that were raised include environmental degradation and climate change, HIV/AIDS and other communicable diseases, gender equality and education for all. Representatives also underlined the need to promote dialogue among civilizations in order to enhance our mutual understanding of each other's cultures.

Ladies and gentlemen, you have provided useful input and guidance for our work ahead. Over the coming days, I will carefully review the points made during the general debate. I will continue listening to any further ideas that you may have for our programme of work.

We must work together in a transparent, efficient and coherent manner in order to make the best use of our time and resources. We have to enhance trust and confidence among ourselves with the aim of serving our common interests and achieving tangible results that will make a difference to the lives of millions of people around the world.

Next week I will communicate my proposal on the agenda. I look forward to constant communication and close and constructive cooperation with all of you in the year ahead.

(spoke in English)

We have heard the last speaker in the debate for this meeting.

A number of delegations have asked to speak in exercise of the right of reply. I remind members that statements in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention, and to five minutes for the second intervention, and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Amorós Núñez (Cuba) *(spoke in Spanish)*: We have heard a speaker making accusations against Cuba, not because of any real concern for human rights, but because of his calling as a straw man, lackey and wretch. Everyone knows that all he wants to do is

to offer service to the powerful nation that seeks a pretext to justify its illegal and cowardly interventionist policy of aggression and blockade against Cuba.

The Czech Republic again shows unparalleled submission in adopting the priorities of its master. It demonstrates how it is currently a global satellite, having not only gradually assumed its role as total accomplice to its master's abuses of power — committed before the very eyes of the world under the pretext of a war against terrorism — but also supporting the aggressive policy towards our small country.

With this attempt to stigmatize Cuba, the Czech Republic seeks in vain to overshadow Cuba's uncompromising rebellion against the unfair imperialist world order, our unyielding defence of our independence and sovereignty and our determination to follow our own path, without accepting any outside interference. It seeks to distort the deeply rooted revolutionary process that has allowed the Cuban people to become a stakeholder and the real master of its fate, ensuring the fullest enjoyment of all human rights by Cuban men and women, without discrimination of any type based on gender, colour or social class.

The Czech Republic wants the world to forget how Cuba was able to do away with corruption, fraud, theft of the nation's heritage and neglect of the hardships of the great majority suffering from hunger, illiteracy and poverty, and how it eliminated the imposition of brutal dictatorships that sought bloodily to silence our people's just demands during most of the almost six decades of neo-colonial government controlled from Washington.

The Czech Government seeks to challenge the fact that no one has been able to prove that there has been a single extrajudicial execution or disappeared person in Cuba since 1959, that a single Cuban mother has been searching for the remains of her disappeared children, or that a single grandmother has been unable to find her grandchild who had been given to another family following the murder of his parents. Never in a Cuban jail has a single prisoner been mistreated; nor have they had to go down on their knees, terrified, before a dog trained to kill. And why does the Government which levels these accusations remain

silent and complicit in the torture and outrages of another country?

The Czech Government allies itself with the policy of aggression against Cuba, thus hiding the real essence of that policy. The imperialists and their Czech lackeys see danger in the spread of the notion that it is possible to build a just society of solidarity where all can enjoy their human rights and where there are no shady deals and massive profits for big capital at the cost of the impoverishment of the people. Everybody knows how much discrimination and exclusion exist in the Czech society. But we are not going to dwell on that here. Let their leaders feel the shame of not being able to do what a small country suffering under a blockade, like Cuba, has been able to do.

Lastly, we want to make something clear to that Government, which has no right to exercise sovereignty over the Cubans: those it describes as the peaceful opposition are really mercenaries who receive millions of dollars and guidance from the United States Government and do not defend or represent their people. These mercenaries, who work in the service of a foreign Power, supporting aggressive policies against their own people — policies that the world rejects — want to turn their homeland into a United States protectorate.

It is we, the people and the Government of Cuba who are the dissenters and the opposition who have defied the pressures that others seek to impose upon us, and whom the Czech Republic will never have the capability or the sense of honour to confront.

Mr. Mohamad (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): We have asked to speak in exercise of the right of reply because it is our duty to correct false information circulated by some parties hostile to the Sudan. When speaking on the subject of Darfur, one must not be deceptive or distort facts to serve foreign interests that are alien to the peace and security of Darfur.

From this very rostrum only a few days ago (see A/61/PV.11) the President of the Republic of Sudan explained the various dimensions of the conflict in Darfur. As in other conflicts taking place in the world today, there are economic and development dimensions in the Darfur region, which has been ravaged by drought and desertification. The people of Darfur, like other peoples in the region, coexist with nomadic Bedouins and sedentary farmers. All of them have been

the victims of conflict over food, pasture and water resources.

The conflict reached its height in 2003 and 2004, then the situation improved, thanks to the Government's strategy of opting for a negotiated political solution as the only way out of the crisis. And, thanks to a purely African effort, we achieved the Darfur Peace Agreement, which was signed on 5 May 2006 in Abuja, Nigeria. Peace has now been restored there, and there have been improvements on every front, particularly on the humanitarian front.

Contradicting information circulated by certain parties that are pleased by crisis and disaster, the head of the main rebel faction is a Vice-President of the Republic. There has been progress on the implementation of this Agreement, progress that undermines the attempts of some to compromise the Agreement.

The situation on the ground is improving daily, especially in the security and humanitarian areas. However, some parties, hostile to the Sudan, keep trying to paint a tragic picture, distorting all the facts. Those same parties had already described events in the Sudan as genocide. They have taken advantage of certain international entities, such as the Security Council with its notorious resolution 1706 (2006), not to achieve peace and stability in Darfur but to serve their domestic political interests.

That shameful resolution seeks to punish my country, which has an independent political position and which plays an active role, because those parties are after Sudan's wealth. It is also contrary to the Abuja Agreement, which stresses the role of the African Union in its implementation. The Agreement did not in any way indicate any role for the United Nations. The Council's resolution circumvents the Agreement by trying to form parallel entities.

The Government of the Sudan has no problem in dealing with the United Nations, of which it has been an effective Member. Witness the presence of one of the largest United Nations missions in the Sudan, where it tries to reinforce implementation of the peace agreement in the south. The recent position of the Government of the Sudan with regard to deployment of international forces in Darfur is a natural position adopted by an independent national Government with total sovereignty.

Flagrant violations and victimization are being exercised by some States, which are trying to use the Security Council to serve their own agendas and interests. Those States are interfering in the internal affairs of my country. The Secretary of State of the United States of America said in Washington that the problem is not the humanitarian situation in Darfur, but rather the restructuring of the Sudan and how it should be governed. We say to the American Secretary of State that the people of the Sudan are the ones who decide how to manage their own affairs.

There have been several resolutions calling for the imposition of sanctions on parties that did not sign the Agreement or that were working to hamper it. Although the Security Council adopted a resolution calling for sanctions against them, the Council has remained powerless because several of the major Powers in the Council are on the side of those hampering peace and are hostile to the Government, which seeks to implement that Agreement. Those same people shed crocodile tears from this very rostrum about the Agreement and the people of Darfur.

Finally, we would like to recall the following. Our conviction has never been as strong as it is now. The deployment of an international force in Darfur has become an end in itself. It is a way to settle political accounts. That has prompted the people of the Sudan to oppose such a colonialist approach, which defies the principles of law and the values, norms and rights enshrined in the Charter, which any Member State has.

From this rostrum we call upon peaceful States to support efforts that encourage parties that have not signed the Agreement to do so. We also urge them to reaffirm the role of the African Union and to offer logistical, technical and financial support to the African Union forces so that they can carry out their political, security and military role in accordance with the Abuja Agreement.

We must respect the principles of the Charter, act wisely and respect the role and contributions of the Government of the Sudan, which has put an end to one of the longest-standing crises in Africa. I refer to the war in the south. We are trying to implement the Darfur Peace Agreement, which was drafted after much patience and perseverance. The language of threats and sabre-rattling and the dramatic exploitation of the situation in Darfur will not prevent our Government and people from making every effort to find a solution

to the problem of Darfur by implementation of the Abuja Agreement, in letter and spirit, and in the interests of our country and of Africa.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Azerbaijan.

Mr. Mammadov (Azerbaijan): I would like to exercise the right of reply in response to the statement made by the Foreign Minister of Armenia, delivered to the General Assembly on 25 September.

Azerbaijan reiterates that this rostrum has again been abused by Armenia in a manner that is aggressive and harmful to the settlement process of the Armenian-Azerbaijan conflict. The Minister's statement is a tragic illustration of the attitude of the current position of Armenia towards its immediate neighbours, a reality that we face both in our daily life in the region and in the negotiation process.

There is a strong temptation to refrain from lowering ourselves to the level of this rhetoric, which is full of accusations with regard to Azerbaijan. Nevertheless, we have to reiterate to the Armenian side that its extremely aggressive statements run counter to the position of the international community as expressed in the relevant resolutions and decisions of the Security Council, the Council of Europe, the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and other international organizations.

With reference to the allegation by the Armenian Minister concerning the destruction of Armenian monuments on the territory of Azerbaijan, let me point out that Azerbaijan has initiated and consented immediately to receive a Council of Europe fact-finding mission to both Armenia and Azerbaijan, including the occupied territories. The mission's task would be to verify the situation with respect to the cultural, historic, religious and architectural monuments and cemeteries in both countries. We are still awaiting the official response of the Government of Armenia to this initiative.

Another notorious allegation to the effect that the Armenian community of the Nagorny-Karabakh region of the Republic of Azerbaijan exercised its right to self-determination is nothing more than Armenia's attempt to use this high principle of international law as a cover for the ethnic cleansing carried out in the

occupied territories of Azerbaijan and the continued occupation of those territories.

General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV), adopted in 1960 and entitled "Declaration on the granting of independence to colonial countries and peoples", foreseeing attempts to erroneously interpret the right of self-determination, clearly determined in its operative paragraph 6 that

"Any attempt aimed at the partial or total disruption of the national unity and the territorial integrity of a country is incompatible with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations."

Both the 1970 Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations (resolution 2625 (XXV), annex) and the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action adopted by the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights have unequivocally declared that recognition of the right of self-determination should not be construed as authorizing or encouraging any action that would dismember or impair totally or in part the territorial integrity or political unity of sovereign and independent States.

These three landmark documents developed clear guidelines for the universal application of the principles embodied in the Charter. It is important to emphasize that the right of people to self-determination is a collective right of an entire population inhabiting a certain territory, and that that right should be exercised peacefully and in a manner that is compatible with the Charter, thereby contributing to the strengthening of the political unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of States. These are the rules governing inter-State relations in this house, and Armenia, as a Member State, has the responsibility to abide by them.

It is disingenuous and unrealistic to claim that the Armenian population of the Nagorny-Karabakh region of the Republic of Azerbaijan exercised its right to self-determination on the territory that was ethnically cleansed of the indigenous Azerbaijani population. Such irresponsible assertions by the Minister of Armenia reflect the degree of morality of the current Armenian leadership, which is attempting to consolidate and legitimize the results of the ethnic cleansing and occupation of the territories of Azerbaijan. The Armenian Minister infringes on the

rights of the indigenous Azerbaijani population of the Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan to return to their homes of origin and to restore normal life and peaceful intercommunal coexistence in the region. Azerbaijan is ready to provide a high level of self-rule for the entire Azerbaijani and Armenian population of the Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan through a peaceful, democratic and legal process, with the direct participation and consent of both communities of the region.

It is apparent that allegations made by the Armenian Foreign Minister underscore the need to increase awareness at the United Nations about the situation in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan. For example, the United Nations should know the truth as to who is who: who is the aggressor and who is the victim of aggression. Azerbaijan will utilize all available means and mechanisms to that end.

In that process, we count on the support and understanding of the Assembly, as it is only through exposing, condemning and putting an end to the morally bankrupt strategy of glorifying occupation as a national cause that we can eliminate the need for hatred and contempt and pave the way for lasting peace and prosperity in our region.

Ms. Doláková (Czech Republic): Let me just briefly comment on what the representative of Cuba said moments ago.

The statement this morning by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic merely stated obvious facts. We cannot but regret such an overreaction to it. It is our sincere hope that the international system for the protection of human rights will become stronger and enjoy full international cooperation. At the same time, we continue to be prepared to discuss — at the appropriate forums and in an open and constructive manner — any matter of substance related to the alleged violations of human rights in our country.

Mr. Amorós Núñez (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Following the logic used by the delegation of the Czech Republic, we would like to use our right of reply to say that those who have come here as medieval inquisitors to judge us have failed to mention their own sins and are pretending to be immune from such failings. They are minimizing the flagrant violations of every sort of human right committed on their territory, thereby making themselves complicit in the massive

violations of human rights perpetrated by their ally and master in many parts of the world. That is the Cuban delegation's impression as regards what was said this morning by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic as well as what has just been said by that country's representative.

We understand that the Government of the Czech Republic cannot talk about the systematic torture taking place in the jails of the illegally occupied Guantánamo naval base, in the prisons of Afghanistan or in Iraq. We know it cannot refer to the transfer of detainees through covert flights for the purpose of torture in areas near its country. We can understand why they do not mention those and other flagrant violations of human rights. They cannot do it, quite simply, for fear of their great master and because of their explicit policy of complicity with that master.

What lessons is that steward, or domestic servant, trying to impart to us — with all due respect to those professions? The behaviour of the Czech Republic in this instance, as has just been illustrated by that country's representative, is a classic case of double standards and hypocrisy. Although we do not want to delve into the many things the Czech Government is itself hiding, there is nevertheless reason to wonder why in his statement this morning the Czech Minister did not tell us about the terrible situation of hundreds of thousands of Roma people who are subject to blatant discrimination in their country and who experience disproportionately high levels of poverty, unemployment, illiteracy and ethnic violence. Why did they not talk about the many instances in which members of that minority are beaten by members of the ethnic majority, with complete impunity?

If there is indeed a desire for cooperation in the area of human rights, I would have thought it important for the representatives of the Czech Republic to mention such matters to us. Why do they not tell us about the rampant corruption in that country, as a result of which the Prime Minister was recently forced to resign? By contrast, corruption has been permanently eradicated from institutional life in Cuba. Why did they not tell us about police brutality in that country, or the growing increase in racism, discrimination, xenophobia and neo-fascist groups? If there were such a great desire for cooperation and dialogue on those subjects, why were those matters not mentioned? What moral standing do they who ask us to be accountable have when they themselves have so much to overcome and,

in their eagerness to serve as accomplices, are silent about the grave violations of human rights of their masters? In fact, not only are they silent about them, they justify and support such actions.

We in Cuba long ago learned to place dignity high on the list of priorities. Cuba will never silence its voice. We will always support those who do not give in and who stand up for the importance of ideas and principles — unlike the puppets, lackeys and

handmaidens of the Government of the Czech Republic.

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 8?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 5.35 p.m.



General Assembly

Sixty-first session

24th plenary meeting

Monday, 2 October 2006, 10 a.m.

New York

Official Records

President: Ms. Al-Khalifa (Bahrain)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 102 (continued)

Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (A/61/1 and Corr.1)

The President: Members will recall that the Secretary-General presented his tenth, and final, annual report to the General Assembly at the 10th plenary meeting on 19 September 2006. The report presents the Organization's activities over the past 12 months in the areas of development, peace and security, human rights, the rule of law, humanitarian affairs and the strengthening of the United Nations. This year, the report also includes a section on global constituencies, including civil society and the business community, in order to cover an area that, according to the Secretary-General, has not previously been classified as a central to the Organization's work but has become increasingly important. It is, therefore, important that Member States also address that issue in their statements.

Ms. Lintonen (Finland): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU). The acceding countries of Bulgaria and Romania, the candidate countries of Turkey, Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia, the European Free Trade Association country member of the European Economic Area — Norway — as well as Ukraine and

the Republic of Moldova, align themselves with this statement.

The European Union would like to thank the Secretary-General for his report (A/61/1) on the work of the Organization. It is very fitting that, for the first time, the report combines the progress made in implementing the Millennium Declaration with a review of the work of the Organization. My comments will follow the outline presented by the Secretary-General in his excellent report, starting with development.

As the 2005 World Summit emphasized, development must be based on global partnership. The EU remains firmly committed to supporting country-led sustainable development through actions on aid volume, aid effectiveness, debt relief, innovative finance mechanisms, trade and the international institutions. The Summit reaffirmed the Millennium Development Goals, together with the development goals and objectives agreed upon at major United Nations conferences and summits, as the framework for development.

The EU has set a timetable to reach new levels of official development assistance. By 2010 that will account for 0.56 per cent of the EU's gross national income — an additional €20 billion annually. By 2015, it will reach 0.7 per cent.

In the global response to HIV/AIDS, the majority of the work to be done must be in achieving a substantial scaling-up of preventive action and in

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achieving social change. Inclusive country-led strategies are a key element in that regard. We must constantly combat stigmatization and discrimination. We must also pay special attention to human rights, particularly the rights of persons belonging to vulnerable groups, to sexual and reproductive health rights and to the rights of women and young people, in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development.

As the Secretary-General has emphasized, Africa is in need of urgent and concerted action in all areas. The EU will continue to strengthen its relations with Africa within the framework of the comprehensive EU Strategy for Africa, which was approved by the European Council in 2005. In the course of next year, that unilateral agreement will be transformed into a joint African strategy, in close cooperation with African partners.

The EU remains firmly committed to joint international efforts to protect the natural resource base, achieve sustainable patterns of consumption and production, and safeguard the Earth's biodiversity. To deal with environmental issues in an effective manner, more coherence is urgently needed in the United Nations system. I therefore call for an early resumption of the discussions on environmental governance, in line with paragraph 169 of the World Summit Outcome document.

The EU welcomes the results of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, which initiated an important dialogue aimed at exchanging experiences and analyzing strategic approaches for long-term cooperative action to address climate change. The EU is committed to participating actively in that dialogue.

With regard to peace and security, the EU fully shares the view of the Secretary-General on the importance of conflict prevention and protecting people from violence. While the development agenda itself is powerful in addressing the root causes of conflicts, the United Nations must have additional tools for conflict prevention. Much has been done, but more steps are still needed to interconnect security and development, as well as with regard to the resolution of disputes by peaceful means. The EU also attaches great importance to promoting the concept of the responsibility to protect.

The EU views the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission, along with the Peacebuilding Support Office and the Peacebuilding Fund, as a key achievement of the United Nations reform process launched by the World Summit. The EU has for many years provided considerable input for peacebuilding activities all over the world and is ready to continue its commitments by actively supporting the work of the Peacebuilding Commission.

The continuing terrorist attacks remind us that terrorism remains one of the most serious threats to all States and peoples. The EU applauds the adoption of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy as an important step in combating terrorism. The General Assembly should keep up the momentum and make every effort to reach an agreement on the comprehensive convention on international terrorism.

This summer, the Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects followed the path of both the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the World Summit, and did not yield any substantial results. It is high time that we tackle the deadlock in multilateral negotiations in this important field of the work of the United Nations in the area of for peace and security. We believe that the developments in revitalizing the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva represent a positive example in that regard.

We welcome the inclusion of rule of law at the national and international levels in the agenda of the General Assembly. The European Union also looks forward to the early establishment of the rule of law assistance unit, as anticipated by the Secretary-General and endorsed by world leaders at the 2005 Summit.

The International Criminal Court is of the utmost importance for ending impunity and establishing the rule of law in post-conflict situations. Furthermore, bringing to justice perpetrators of crimes against humanity and war crimes contributes significantly to preventing the recurrence of those crimes, as well as to promoting the prevention of conflicts at their early stages.

The European Union is strongly committed to ensuring that the Human Rights Council will be able to meet the objectives set by our leaders at the World

Summit and the needs and expectations of rights holders, namely, the people of the world. The active participation of non-governmental organizations is a central element of the work of the human rights machinery of the United Nations, and should be further strengthened on the basis of the practices established under the Commission for Human Rights.

Another important decision taken at the World Summit was the doubling of the resources of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. The EU is pleased to note that the plan of action presented by the High Commissioner in May 2005 has been complemented by the first biennial programme plan for the years 2008 and 2009.

We welcome the recent improvements in the area of humanitarian action, including the establishment of the Central Emergency Response Fund. The current deteriorating humanitarian and security situation in the Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo is particularly alarming. Gender-based violence is a grave concern that deserves urgent attention. The provision of protection and assistance to internally displaced persons needs to be strengthened further. In addition, the predictability of humanitarian funding needs to be improved, as some emergencies remain chronically under-funded or even neglected.

In accordance with the overall efforts for more efficiency and coherence, the EU welcomes the creation of the High-level Panel on System-wide Coherence. It is vital that the Organization continue to move towards enhanced efficiency and effectiveness, as agreed by our heads of State and Government at the World Summit.

The European Union is committed to the work of the ad hoc informal working group on mandate review and remains fully dedicated to the process of strengthening and renewing the Organization. We also welcome the progress already made in the area of management reform, including the establishment of an ethics office, the implementation of whistle-blower protection and the agreement to reform the current unwieldy information and communication technology systems. However, much remains to be done. Only through strengthened accountability and better management will the United Nations become stronger and more effective. Strengthening oversight in the United Nations is one of the EU's priorities.

There are almost 90,000 personnel serving in 18 United Nations peacekeeping operations, directly impacting the lives of hundreds of millions of people. We therefore recognize the need for a more integrated and mobile global workforce, and we look forward to discussing that and other proposals in the context of human resources management reform.

The protection and security of staff in the field and at Headquarters is of the utmost importance.

Given the need for urgent renovations in order to make the United Nations Headquarters in New York safe and more functional, we need an agreement on funding of the Capital Master Plan during this session.

Before I conclude, I would like to comment on Chapter VI of the report of the Secretary-General, which deals with global constituencies. The EU fully shares the views of the Secretary-General on these issues: security is not a matter for Governments alone, and development needs are human needs.

I would like to conclude by thanking the Secretary-General and the staff of the United Nations for work well done, both at Headquarters and in the field. The European Union applauds the Secretary-General for his numerous ideas and changes made in the past 10 years to bring the United Nations up to best international practices.

Mr. Gaisenak (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): The delegation of Belarus has studied the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (A/61/1) with great attention.

The general debate at the current session has shown that the United Nations has not yet managed to realize its full potential in the areas of peacebuilding and having a constructive and organizing influence. At the moment, the Organization is unable to have a decisive impact on building an atmosphere of trust between States, preventing military conflicts and combating terrorism and poverty. The root causes of the failures and missed opportunities should be sought in a complex international situation that is determined by a unipolar world order. So long as that order persists — in which the way to solve problems is dictated by a single party — progress will be unattainable.

Global challenges and threats can be overcome only if we act together, pooling all our strengths and resources. We must support existing focal points of

consolidation and development and encourage the creation of new ones that can resist external pressure and become sources of regional and global stability. It is important that we adopt new approaches to the problems related to security and development. Such approaches should be based on multipolarity and an acknowledgement of the diversity of ways in which the progressive development of countries and peoples can be achieved.

We have noted with regret and sadness that, as many world leaders have stated, the global partnership for development has remained only a concept on paper. We have taken that to heart, because the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) affect the fate of billions of people: their lives, their health and their prosperity. Who other than the United Nations will care for them?

Our support for the principles of true partnership inspired Belarus to seek to become a member of the Economic and Social Council. We come to the Council with a clear intention to utilize the full potential of the United Nations and its social and economic institutions by providing practical support for the efforts by the Governments of least developed countries to implement their national development strategies. The Economic and Social Council should become an international forum in which the most important international decisions on development assistance are taken. That approach was reflected in our proposals for reform of the Economic and Social Council, which were submitted to the General Assembly for consideration in February.

We have often stressed the need to improve United Nations activities in the area of human rights. We oppose double standards and the use of the issue of human rights as a pretext for applying political pressure on sovereign States. We support equitable dialogue aimed at truly protecting human rights.

It is because of the need to genuinely promote human rights that Belarus has prepared and will submit to the General Assembly a draft resolution on improving the coordination of efforts against trafficking in persons. Today, a quarter of all victims of human trafficking come from the regions of Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). The time has come to take robust and coordinated action to protect those who are weak and vulnerable, particularly women and children. It is also high time to speak out regarding the

responsibility borne by those who exploit the victims of such trafficking. We believe that the elaboration of a viable United Nations strategy against trafficking in persons should be the ultimate objective of our efforts in this area.

My country, the Republic of Belarus, is located in a unique geographic region that is experiencing profound economic, political and social transformations. That region, Eastern Europe, has enjoyed very high economic growth rates for several years. Does that give the United Nations the right to exclude from its agenda the problems of countries with economies in transition? The answer is obvious if we address the differences in the levels of socio-economic development among the subregions of Eastern Europe. Members should judge for themselves: there are 125 million people — including 25 million children — living below the poverty line. In many small and vulnerable countries with transitional economies, there has been both progress and painful movement backwards in terms of achieving the Millennium Development Goals, especially in the areas of education and health care. Eastern Europe and the CIS countries are falling behind Latin America and Asia in achieving some of the MDGs.

Therefore, together with our partners, we are preparing and will submit to the General Assembly a draft resolution on integration of countries with economies in transition into the world economy. The draft resolution's key objective is to ensure the provision of targeted international financial and technical assistance to the countries that truly need it. We ask delegations to support the draft resolution.

Belarus, as one of the few countries that have voluntarily renounced the possession of nuclear weapons, is deeply concerned about the lack of progress in bringing about the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) undoubtedly remains the basis of the current international security system. We believe that it is essential to implement all three elements of the NPT: disarmament, non-proliferation and the right to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. We emphasize that placing restrictions on the inalienable right of all non-nuclear-weapon States to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes directly undermines the Treaty.

The lack of results in disarmament forums in recent years is a direct consequence of the rising level of confrontation in the modern world and of the tendency to seek to solve problems from a position of strength. Progress on disarmament is essential. It is important not only that we preserve the existing United Nations disarmament machinery, but also that we make it function properly.

Here, we are pleased to welcome one positive example: the establishment of a new nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia. Four Central Asian States are our partners in a regional initiative, the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO). Belarus, in its capacity as Chair of the CSTO, has circulated a statement of support for that initiative.

Belarus attaches great importance not only to the implementation of international treaties banning existing types of weapons of mass destruction or imposing control measures on them, but also to the adoption of measures to prevent the development of new types of such weapons. Belarus was a sponsor of the relevant draft resolution. The fact that that draft resolution was not adopted by consensus during the sixtieth session of the General Assembly is alarming. Let me ask those who did not support the draft whether they really intend to create new types of weapons of mass destruction.

Certainly, a significant event was the consensus adoption by the General Assembly of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and plan of action (resolution 60/288). We welcome that important event, because, for the first time in United Nations history, all 192 Member States agreed on common principles and approaches for combating terrorism at the global level.

It is understandable, in our view, when the permanent members of the Security Council have differing opinions on ways to resolve international crises. More often than not, the most balanced and wisest decisions are taken as a result. However, we should like to note that more coordinated action and swifter decision-making by Council members could help the Council to respond more effectively to present-day threats and challenges and to make the lives of people in the world's hot spots a little safer.

I now turn to the subject of reform. United Nations reform is not proceeding smoothly. On the one hand, important new bodies were established at

the sixtieth session, although their effectiveness has yet to be assessed.

On the other hand, revitalization of the General Assembly is moving slowly and does not encompass some important spheres. Yet, we feel confident that a step-by-step, balanced approach that takes into account the interests of all Member States is much better and more viable than the intention to create a system of management that suits only a narrow circle of influential States.

We should recall that the goal of reform is not the cost-cutting, or even the improvement, of management. Reform is being carried out in order that every human being on this planet might be aware of the concern felt by the international community and be able to believe in his or her own better future.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): The Pakistan delegation expresses its appreciation to the Secretary-General on the presentation of his annual report on the work of the Organization. We note the changed format of the report, covering the four main areas of the 2005 Summit Declaration. In this process, however, the in-depth review of some of the important political issues with which the United Nations is involved, such as the Middle East conflict, Palestine, South Asian relations and Kashmir, have not been adequately covered. In future, it would be advisable for the report to be assembled into the 12 thematic clusters of the United Nations General Assembly's agenda.

The United Nations is an indispensable instrument for the promotion of humanity's shared goals. The present and emerging challenges of the twenty-first century can only be overcome through multilateral cooperation. If the United Nations did not already exist, we would need to create it.

It has been aptly and repeatedly stated that the United Nations must adapt and be equipped to address these new challenges and circumstances of our times. The reform initiatives of the Secretary-General, the 2005 Summit decisions and the implementation process pursued this year were all guided by this preoccupation. The creation of the Peacebuilding Commission, the Human Rights Council and the Emergency Response Fund are all cause for modest satisfaction. Of course, there are several issues where implementation of the Summit's decisions remain outstanding, including the revitalization of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social

Council and the comprehensive reform of the Security Council.

The reform exercise has been plagued not only by the multiple objectives that are sought to be simultaneously promoted, but also by the absence of agreement on the strategic objectives of these reforms. During its 60-year history, the United Nations has passed from the bipolar structures of the cold war through a period of unipolarity. It is now at the prelude to a multipolar world. We have entered an era of globalization and interdependence, but also one of huge asymmetries in power, wealth and knowledge. Despite the 2005 Summit, we, the United Nations, have yet to establish a new paradigm under which world affairs and global challenges will be managed.

Our deliberations in these halls confront conflicting pulls and pressures. They have been marked by sharp suspicions between the North and the South. Some would wish our Organization to mirror the unequal asymmetries of the "real" world. Others, the more numerous developing countries, wish to utilize the United Nations as the principal instrument to change and democratize the unequal realities of our globalized, yet divided, world.

Some wish to utilize the United Nations as an instrument for collective enforcement of "good behaviour"; others, the more numerous, wish to use it to promote collective and cooperative solutions to political, economic, social and environmental problems. In our view, the strategic objectives, political parameters and modus operandi of the United Nations must be consistent with the principles and purposes enshrined in the United Nations Charter — principles and purposes whose lofty vision is as relevant today as it was 60 years ago.

One important manifestation of this tension between equity and the status quo is the breakdown of the consensus on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. The 2005 Summit was unable to agree on any provisions on disarmament and non-proliferation. The Conference on Disarmament remains paralyzed. Major Powers have resiled from the commitment to nuclear disarmament. An arms race may be soon under way in outer space. The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) regime is riven by doubts and double standards regarding, for instance, rights, obligations and scope of peaceful nuclear cooperation. A la carte solutions to proliferation

problems are sought to be prescribed in restrictive regimes or through the Security Council. The three nuclear-weapon States not in the NPT remain outside international non-proliferation arrangements. Instead of evolving agreed arrangements to integrate them as partners in the non-proliferation regime, discrimination is now being introduced among the three as well, with possibly negative effects for non-proliferation and international security.

Pakistan believes it is time to re-build the international consensus on both disarmament and non-proliferation and to agree on effective and non-discriminatory processes to promote both. A special conference should be convened, under the aegis of the United Nations, to promote such an international consensus.

A few weeks ago, the General Assembly adopted a United Nations strategy against terrorism. We hope this will enhance international cooperation. Yet, the strategy will remain incomplete and, finally, fruitless, so long as it does not fully and frontally address the root causes of terrorism, State terrorism and the misuse of terrorism to justify foreign occupation and the suppression of the right of peoples to self-determination. In the process of its prescribed periodic review, the strategy should be revised to address these issues. The General Assembly should create the intergovernmental mechanism it requires to assume principal responsibility for overseeing the United Nations activities relating to terrorism.

Under the rubric of peace and security, the Secretary-General's report outlines the myriad actions of the United Nations to manage conflicts and their consequences. These are the invaluable intercessions of this Organization in the service of peace. Yet, some observations are essential.

The United Nations, including the Security Council, is preoccupied today with intra-State or internal conflicts, rather than with the existential threats posed by inter-State disputes.

Conflicts such as those in the Middle East, in South Asia, on the Korean peninsula and elsewhere are being managed largely in other formats and forums rather than the United Nations, which should be actively involved in order to promote equitable solutions to such conflicts and disputes, in accordance with the resolutions of this Organization. It possesses the mechanisms and the authority, under Chapters VI

and VII, as well as through the International Court of Justice, to promote that objective.

Secondly, even in the case of internal conflicts, the attention of the international community is mostly aroused only after the breakdown of peace. No doubt, the intercessions of the United Nations — especially in peacekeeping operations — have proved indispensable in restoring peace. Pakistan hosts the oldest United Nations peacekeeping mission — the United Nations Military Observer Group for India and Pakistan — which is deployed on the Line of Control in disputed Jammu and Kashmir. We have also been, over the past three years, the largest troop contributor to United Nations peacekeeping. Peacekeeping missions are now much more numerous, more complex and more dangerous. But the world community's combined forces are now perhaps reaching the limits of their capacity for collective intervention. The most recent Mission, for Lebanon, is proving difficult to organize. Another on the anvil, for Darfur, raises serious questions about the advisability and possible consequences of a United Nations-authorized intervention against the wishes of a country's Government.

The fundamental question, however, is: Why is the United Nations not more actively engaged in the prevention of such internal problems, before they turn into full-fledged civil wars requiring expensive and difficult peacekeeping operations? Any analysis of these conflicts would reveal that, at their root, they are the result of what I call the "politics of scarcity". The secret to their prevention is rapid economic and social development and, in Africa's case at least, an end to the illegal exploitation of the vast natural resources of these developing countries.

The report's review of the Organization's development activities, especially the follow-up to 2005 Summit, reflects a fair review of ongoing activities. However, the report fails to offer a full analysis of the development picture and the enormous challenges confronting the developing countries. Globalization has enabled several developing countries to break through the barrier of poverty, mostly as a result of their own endeavours, but it has further marginalized the most vulnerable States and communities. The promises of higher official development assistance and debt cancellation made at the 2005 Summit have not yet materialized. The

so-called Doha Development Agenda is on life support, if not already deceased.

If the promise of a North-South partnership for development is to become a reality, it is essential to ensure the full and timely implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the internationally agreed development goals. Developing countries that so request should be assisted in formulating their national development strategies. Development partners — the industrialized and richer countries and international institutions — must fulfil their commitments to support the success of these strategies, including through higher official development assistance, debt relief, trade and investment. To that end, a politically and technically empowered monitoring mechanism should be established, under the Economic and Social Council, and specific indicators developed to enable an objective monitoring of the implementation of the MDGs and the internationally agreed development goals by all concerned. The resolution adopted on the follow-up to the development provisions of the 2005 Summit outlines the steps that should be taken for this purpose.

While development was proclaimed to be the first priority of the 2005 Summit, it is telling and sad that, of all the institutional reform decisions, the one relating to the empowerment and revival of the Economic and Social Council is the one that could not be adopted prior to the conclusion of the sixtieth session of the General Assembly, despite the broad agreement on this issue at the 2005 Summit. That resolution must be approved without further delay.

It is also evident that the entire United Nations development cooperation system needs to be strengthened and streamlined, at both the country and intergovernmental levels and in both the policy and operational areas. In that context, the recommendations of the High-level Panel on System-wide Coherence will require close and urgent attention by the General Assembly.

As in peacekeeping, the role of the United Nations in coordinating the response to humanitarian emergencies has been indispensable and outstanding. This was witnessed in the response to both the tsunami and to the massive earthquake which devastated the northern regions of Pakistan and Jammu and Kashmir a year ago. We welcome the establishment of the \$500

million Central Emergency Response Fund. We believe that United Nations humanitarian activities would benefit from closer intergovernmental engagement and oversight under the Economic and Social Council.

The first meetings of the Human Rights Council, while constructively directed, have confirmed the different dispositions of various countries and groups regarding its agenda, structures and working methods. In our view, the main issues are the promotion of a cooperative rather than a coercive approach to human rights; the need for full integration of the right to development into the framework of the human rights matrix; the avoidance of double standards and political targeting of developing and especially Muslim countries; the composition and role of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights; the rationalization of special mechanisms and procedures; and the streamlining of the role of civil — and sometimes uncivil — society in the Human Rights Council and related forums.

Another important outstanding issue is the reform of the Security Council. This is of vital interest to every Member State. A solution to Security Council reform would need to accommodate the interests of all and would have to be resolved by consensus or the widest possible agreement. While Security Council reform has been discussed and debated for a decade, compromise has not been explored through negotiations. A negotiating process, pursued with political flexibility and diplomatic creativity, could evolve an agreement that accommodates the interests of all Member States and regions. This general desire for a negotiated and agreed solution was evident at the dinner meeting on 20 September hosted by the President of Pakistan and the Prime Minister of Italy. We trust, Madam President, that you will lead this effort to open negotiations with a view to evolving an agreed solution for the comprehensive reform of the Security Council.

The endeavour to introduce reforms in the United Nations management and Secretariat and to review old mandates has proved to be extensive. I was honoured to co-chair that enterprise, first with my former Canadian colleague and now with Ambassador David Cooney of Ireland.

The mandate review exercise has produced extensive information on the almost 10,000 five-year-old mandates approved by the principal United Nations

organs. However, we have not been able in the Assembly to proceed beyond the consideration of 400 five-year-old non-renewed mandates. The co-Chairs had conveyed to your predecessor, Madam, that the guidelines they had circulated offered the best possibility of continuing this exercise, which will be laborious and time-consuming. We will need to decide by year-end whether and how the mandate review should be conducted.

Similarly, the Secretariat and management reforms will need to be pursued objectively and carefully, bearing in mind the interests of all Member States. Efficiency and effectiveness are desirable and endorsed by all. But any effort to further erode the financial and budgetary authority of the General Assembly will be resisted by the majority of Member States.

The performance and effectiveness of the United Nations depends on the following crucial factors: first, the quality of its human resources; secondly, the financial resources provided to support its activities; thirdly, the authority vested in the Organization by the Member States; and fourthly, the political will to support the mandated programmes and activities of the Organization. All efforts to achieve United Nations reform must ensure that these prerequisites are available to our Organization and our new Secretary-General.

Those of us who have endeavoured to carve out a central role for the United Nations in world affairs have often been obliged to temper our idealism in the face of power realities. However, this should not shake our belief that sustainable peace and universal prosperity can be secured once principles have primacy over power. The world needs a United Nations which does not always mirror the harsh and unequal power realities. The world needs a United Nations which acts with moral authority and credibility. The world needs a United Nations which can stand up for the weak and the powerless and which is a force for objectivity, fairness, equality and justice in the management of international relations.

Mr. Sen (India): We congratulate you on your election, Madam, and on the efficient manner in which you have been conducting the work of the sixty-first session. We assure you of our constructive cooperation. We thank the Secretary-General for the comprehensive

overview of the Organization's main achievements and challenges during the past 12 months.

As the report highlights, the Secretary-General has overseen the Organization's many achievements during the past 10 years. The Millennium Summit, which led to the adoption of the Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), was followed up last year with the five-year review and the adoption of the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document. The MDGs embody a quantifiable vision of certain important economic and social rights and, in this sense, they carry forward the right to development. The global partnership for development, as set out in the Millennium Declaration and reaffirmed by the 2005 World Summit, is primarily a commitment to make the right to development a reality for all, and we should reach broad agreement in fulfilling the promise.

The report reminds us of the imperative of implementing the global partnership for development; the need for enhanced focus on peacebuilding; and the necessity of increased attention to the special needs of Africa. Here, I would like to say that, until there is a sharp decrease in vulnerability and a sharp increase in welfare throughout the African continent and in the small island developing States, we cannot really pride ourselves on any significant measure of success. We also need to focus on health issues, including HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis, and on the need to strengthen the United Nations and make it a robust and vibrant Organization, responsive to the needs of the time and, by implication, to the needs of developing countries, which constitute the vast majority of the Organization.

It is worth remembering that what was achieved at the 2005 World Summit was the result of the solidarity of the developing countries. This remains important in the implementation of the commitments set out in the World Summit Outcome; agreement reached in the context of development follow-up is indicative.

For developing countries, the centrepiece is development. Poverty and conflicts are not only the legacy of the colonial past, but also the epiphenomena of the structural policies of the international financial institutions. The present international system takes from the poor: net transfers from developing countries have continued to rise for the twelfth consecutive year,

reaching over \$450 billion. Without addressing the development problems faced by the vast majority of the United Nations membership, security in its full sense cannot be achieved. The report of the Secretary-General notes that, since the Millennium Summit in 2000, the progress has been uneven and the ongoing levels of human deprivation remain staggering. Implementing the global partnership for development — MDG 8 — is a categorical imperative.

The MDGs cannot be achieved without implementing the 0.7 per cent official development assistance (ODA) target in a time-bound manner or without innovative financing, deeper debt relief, enhanced market access and improved global economic governance. Even though aggregate ODA reached a record high of \$106 billion in 2005, only a small fraction of that nominal increase actually represented additional finance to support real investments in countries that need them most.

We welcome the agreement reached to monitor the fulfilment of commitments made to provide development assistance. India is supportive of all initiatives in support of the low-income countries, including those in Africa, where debt burdens impose serious constraints on the attainment of the MDGs. It is also important that debt stock cancellation is complemented by sharp increases in ODA.

Addressing systemic issues is an urgent practical necessity. As reaffirmed at the 2005 World Summit and subsequently agreed in the context of the development follow-up this July, there is an overwhelming logic for the United Nations to give direction to the comprehensive reform of the international financial, monetary and trading systems. The democratic deficit in the international financial architecture can be addressed only through a fundamental reform of the quota structure, which is an absolute necessity for the credibility and legitimacy of international financial institutions.

The United Nations should encourage further effective, time-bound steps for the second stage of International Monetary Fund (IMF) quota reform without delay, involving a basic revision of the formula and subsequent quota increases for all underrepresented countries, as well as the revision of the articles of the IMF.

The suspension of the Doha round of trade negotiations is a cause for concern. The realization of

the development imperatives of the Doha Development Agenda, the July framework and the Hong Kong Ministerial Declaration is crucial for developing countries. The overarching principle of special and differential treatment remains a categorical imperative. A demonstration of political will by the developed countries will be required if negotiations are to be saved.

Giving clear political direction to the WTO, which was not possible in the 2005 World Summit, in spite of broad political support, remains necessary. Here I would like to say that the problems of the developing countries, which are sometimes attributed to inadequate liberalization or corruption are, in fact, a result of the fact that the developed countries have gone back on the promises that they made.

In fact, the history of trade negotiations is a history of broken promises and silenced consciences. In the Uruguay round, in return for the acceptance by developing countries of lower tariffs and new regimes such as the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights, the developed countries undertook to phase out the textile quotas and to abolish agricultural subsidies. The first took 10 years; the second — the removal of agricultural subsidies — has not yet happened. That really amounts to burying the Punta del Este Declaration. The Doha round, therefore, needs some kind of an impetus from the United Nations if the balance is to be redressed. It is here that the role of the United Nations in standing firm on the reform and strengthening of the Economic and Social Council — an issue to which I shall turn soon — becomes an extreme imperative.

The primacy of development on the global agenda can be achieved only if the United Nations takes a lead in setting the international economic agenda. The problem is the reform of the United Nations system — the reinstatement of the United Nations-driven and development-oriented approach. What is needed is United Nations oversight of the international economic agenda and promotion of the reform of international economic institutions through a revitalized General Assembly and a strengthened Economic and Social Council, as well as a comprehensively reformed Security Council. Only if we remain actively engaged can we correct the imbalance and ensure that no country is too weak to influence the United Nations, that the economic agenda

is truly development-oriented and that laws are made by the General Assembly.

Here, I would like to say that, in the case of the Economic and Social Council, the recent book by Joseph E. Stiglitz, on making globalization work, recommends specifically that the United Nations — and here the Economic and Social Council is the appropriate body — should undertake a regular audit of international economic institutions, carrying out a regular assessment of the performance of those institutions. In fact, he also says that the Economic and Social Council should play a critical, central role, in shaping the global economic agenda. And here, the development forums that have been set up under the Economic and Social Council could, in our view, play an important role.

The 2005 World Summit emphasized the need to strengthen the Economic and Social Council in order to enable it to play a critical role in promoting international cooperation for development, as well as in enhancing policy coherence and coordination among agencies. An early conclusion of negotiations on this issue is needed, as is a demonstration of political will to enable the Economic and Social Council to fulfil its mandate as envisaged in the Charter, and to contribute to peacebuilding and peace consolidation efforts in countries emerging from conflict, in accordance with the agreements reached at the time of the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission.

Similarly, in the context of strengthening the role and authority of the General Assembly, early consultations on the re-establishment of the ad hoc working group on General Assembly revitalization is called for.

The General Assembly is best placed to ensure that the candidate proposed for the post of Secretary-General is sensitive to the needs of the developing countries.

Here I may mention that, like the Security Council, the international economic institutions were set up in 1945 and bear the stigmata of 1945. They are really clubs for the rich and powerful, and they play by the rules of the old school tie. This is evident from the fact that the richest countries have — in fact, one rich country effectively has — a veto in the International Monetary Fund (IMF), as we saw recently at the Singapore conference. In fact, a single powerful country is able to appoint the head of the World Bank

and shares with Western Europe the top two IMF posts. Are the use of the veto and the appointments in the Security Council any different?

In the Security Council, again, we find exactly the same procedure at work, so this is not an accident or a coincidence, but part of an established pattern. The General Assembly was not able to revitalize the General Assembly itself, through this year's resolution 60/286, which in fact remains as much a dead letter as resolution 51/241 of 1997. This is a matter of some concern to the developing countries, which are the vast majority to which the Organization should actually be responsive. If the developing countries are not able to eschew the prospect of immediate gains, which are by their very nature evanescent, then this Organization is likely to pass out of their hands, and we are likely to be reduced to occupying the margins, or a limbo where the Assembly, through continual adaptation to continually lowered expectations, would be reduced to the role of an irrelevant spectator.

Hence the crucial importance, which I reiterate, of revitalizing the General Assembly, of setting up once again the working group on the revitalization of the Assembly and of standing firm on the reform of the Economic and Social Council in terms of its linkage with peacebuilding in conflict-prone countries and those emerging from conflict, as well as its central role in the reform and accountability of international economic, monetary and trading institutions.

The recent tragic events in Lebanon and the stasis in the peace process in the Middle East have highlighted the growing failure of the Security Council, which is designated by the Charter as having primary responsibility for issues relating to peace and security. The main problems that beset peacekeeping are not a lack of resources, or even personnel, but an unrepresentative Security Council which lacks the political will to act and which, when it does, does so in a manner that is entirely inadequate. The Council also needs to shore up its participation in peacekeeping operations. The Secretary-General's report states that an overwhelming number of troops in United Nations peacekeeping operations are contributed by developing countries. This is a distressing reflection on the Security Council's willingness to share the burden of maintaining international peace and security.

It is no accident that the Secretary-General's report refers to the enhancement of legitimacy and the urgent need for reform to ensure the relevance and credibility of the Security Council. We agree with the Secretary-General that the Council should be more representative of today's geopolitical realities and more efficient and transparent in its working methods. There is widespread acknowledgement that no reform of the United Nations would be complete without the reform of the Security Council. The Security Council must not only be more representative but also more effective if it is to be able to satisfactorily perform the role mandated to it by the Charter.

The recent General Assembly debate on Security Council reform, held on 20 and 21 July 2006 (see A/60/PV.94-96), gave a clear signal that the momentum for reform remains intact, and that maintaining the status quo is unacceptable. Developing countries remain grossly underrepresented in the Council, even though most decisions taken by the Security Council directly affect them. Thus, developing countries continue to face the same underlying systemic challenges that brought them together in the 1960s; indeed, today, in many respects, the environment is harsher. The voice of developing countries and their further empowerment in the international arena is vital for levelling the so-called playing field.

It is, therefore, imperative that any expansion and restructuring of the Security Council include developing countries both as permanent members and in the non-permanent category. We are committed to undertaking intensive consultations with other developing countries, in a spirit of solidarity, and to embark on a South initiative for the reform of the Organization in a manner that is reflective of the aspirations of the developing countries and that ensures that the reformed structures are responsive to their needs in areas ranging from development to peace and security, strengthening of the Economic and Social Council, revitalization of the General Assembly and comprehensive reform of the Security Council.

I must say that in the case of Lebanon and the stasis in the Middle East peace process we saw the ineffectiveness of the Security Council. In fact, it reminded me of the ancient Roman emperor Nero, who fiddled while Rome burned. Incidentally, this is not a reference to the Uniting for Consensus group. This phenomenon is not accidental. It is simply inherent in

the composition of the Security Council, because some of the permanent five suffer from the same thing, a "virtue" that they share, in fact, with the Russian tsars, the French Bourbons and the English Stuarts: they suffer from a reification of the present, a belief that human institutions cannot change. And unless such fundamental change is effected, we will be unable to overcome the basic problems that are confronting this Organization in field after field — including in peacebuilding and even in the setting up of the Peacebuilding Commission, as we saw.

Also, some have recently spoken of an interim solution. Interim to what? Certainly not to a long-term solution. It seems that the deliberate intention is for such an interim solution to actually prevent a long-term solution, to prevent the introduction of balance, to prevent the introduction of genuine, comprehensive reform in the Security Council, and to ensure that we go on as we are. In fact, an interim solution is not really required, and the reason is simple: because we already have an interim solution. The interim solution is very clear. Given today's political necessities and under the efficient provisions of the United Nations Charter, we are empowered to elect non-permanent members. We have to elect non-permanent members that will be responsive to the needs of the vast majority of the developing countries and responsive to the cry of the vulnerable, of the small, of the developing and of the marginalized, and to the blood of the slain and the voices of the captive and the innumerable lost souls. It is only such members that would be able to introduce a certain measure of balance and open the charmed circle to a very minimal extent, but at least make a beginning, in the Security Council. So, electing such non-permanent members is already, in fact, what constitutes an interim solution.

What we need to work towards, therefore is, in fact, a long-term solution, a solution that would make this Organization responsive to the developing countries, which can be done only through an initiative of the South; we know, for instance, how the spending cap was imposed. The spending cap was imposed by consensus. But how were the deeply damaging governance and flexibility proposals halted in May in the first place? They were halted by the resolute action and solidarity of the developing countries. Therefore, the lesson is very clear: it is only through an organic initiative from below — a Southern initiative — that we will undertake real United Nations reform that is in

the interests of the South: reform of the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly and comprehensive reform of the Security Council. Only such reform has any real possibility of changing the Organization.

The Secretary-General's report speaks of the increased recourse to the United Nations for peacekeeping and the prevention of armed conflict. That highlights the need for the Organization to develop capabilities in the sphere of peacebuilding, not merely in the cause of peacekeeping, which is underlined most starkly in the vicious circle of violence that continues to plague the Middle East. It also highlights the fact that conflict resolution needs to go well beyond its current limited role of keeping belligerents apart.

In that sense, the Peacebuilding Commission is a welcome effort. Our pledge of \$2 million to that body reflects our perception that there is a grave need for a shift of focus from just peacekeeping to peacebuilding and peace consolidation. The Commission must establish its credibility. As a member of the Organizing Committee, we are committed to contribute in that direction.

The surge in peacekeeping reported by the Secretary-General has brought new challenges and more demands, although earlier problems persist. The issues of effective planning, congruity among mandates, resources allocated and objectives to be achieved, and the safety and security of peacekeepers are other areas of particular concern. Those questions should be the subjects of constant dialogue and interaction among the troop-contributing countries, the Security Council and the Secretariat if peacekeeping is to be effective.

India remains steadfast in its commitment to promoting world peace and security. Our contribution to United Nations peacekeeping is part of that broader commitment. We have been one of the most consistent contributors of troops to the United Nations and shall continue to uphold that tradition. We shall continue to work with the Secretariat and other Member States in order to make peacekeeping the effective instrument that we all wish it to be.

Nothing can justify terrorism. The adoption of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy is a step in the right direction, to the extent that the Strategy signals the will of the international

community to tolerate no longer the actions of the sponsors of terrorism or the actions of those who wilfully fail to prevent terrorists from utilizing their territories for moral or material shelter. In fact, we understand State terrorism to mean a State's patronizing and sponsoring of terrorists to disturb the peace of other States.

Notwithstanding the setback of failing to meet the timeline set at the 2005 World Summit for concluding a comprehensive convention on international terrorism, we believe that agreement on a draft convention is attainable. We must now work together for the early finalization and adoption of such a convention. We believe that a formulation that would not affect the legal status of the entities involved in terms of international humanitarian law is one possible approach through which an agreement could be reached. Here, we are open to compromise.

The 2005 World Summit, while recognizing that peace and security, development and human rights are interlinked and mutually reinforcing, underscored the centrality of development. The seventh session of the Working Group on the Right to Development, which was held in Geneva in January 2006, adopted a set of criteria for evaluating the fulfilment of commitments aimed at a global partnership for development — MDG 8 — from the perspective of the right to development. It also said that the policies of the Bretton Woods institutions have to be corrected in terms of their deficiencies from the perspective of the right to development.

Thus, there is broad agreement that straddles the divisions; there is no fundamental contradiction. The efforts to mainstream all human rights — including the right to development — by strengthening linkages between the normative and operational work of the United Nations system need to proceed in a measured manner, taking into account the specific needs and requirements of the Member States concerned.

We welcome the establishment of the Human Rights Council, whose focus should be the promotion of human rights through international cooperation and genuine dialogue among Member States, including capacity-building and mutual assistance. We believe that the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights should extend technical assistance in the area of human rights to Member States and enhance their capacity-building in

that regard at their request. It is in that spirit that India supported the strengthening of the Office of the High Commissioner, including an increase in its resources from the regular budget of the United Nations.

We agree that there is a need for further steps aimed at enhancing the speed and effectiveness of United Nations responses to humanitarian emergencies. India will continue to play a constructive role in that regard, bearing in mind the lessons learned from experiences in the field. India was constructively engaged in the setting up of the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF). India's contribution of \$2 million to CERF at its launch in March 2006 is a reflection of our solidarity with other developing countries in the aftermath of disasters. We will remain actively engaged in the process of improving the functioning of the Fund.

Our Organization needs to reform to keep up with today's complex challenges. We welcome the reforms that have been implemented in the Secretariat since 1997 and look forward to constructive discussions during the sixty-first session on important issues such as governance and oversight. The declared objectives of those reform proposals cannot be repudiated. Nevertheless, the process often becomes as important as the goal itself. We would therefore stress the importance of discussions on these issues, to be undertaken in an open, inclusive and transparent manner. We are ready to engage on these issues with an open mind.

On the issue of governance, we reiterate the importance of the existing structure of administrative and budgetary decision-making in the United Nations, based on the primacy of the General Assembly and its Fifth Committee. Improvement is a continual process, and we could discuss ways to make administrative and budgetary decision-making in the Organization more efficient and effective. Altering the unique, all-inclusive character of the Fifth Committee, which is being proposed by some, has already been rejected by Member States and remains unacceptable. We strongly support strengthening the oversight role of the General Assembly, maintaining the intergovernmental nature of the United Nations and respecting the sovereign equality of all Member States with regard to participation in United Nations decision-making processes.

We need to strengthen oversight in the United Nations system by making the oversight bodies independent. We seek greater accountability to Member States on the part of the Secretariat. We believe that the United Nations should have a fair, transparent and rules-based selection process that is based on equitable geographical representation and has due regard for gender balance. We call for administration of justice in the United Nations based on due process of law that is fair, consistent, non-discriminatory and speedy. We look forward to comprehensive procurement reforms in the Organization.

There is a broad realization of the need to work urgently towards a nuclear-weapon-free world. Yet the goal of nuclear disarmament remains elusive. We believe that the best non-proliferation measure is universal disarmament and that the international community needs to take immediate steps to eliminate the threat of use of nuclear weapons. At this session of the General Assembly, India will be presenting a working paper on the issue of nuclear disarmament, on which we look forward to working with other Member States. We shall provide more detailed comments during discussions of the respective agenda items in the General Assembly and in its main Committees.

Mr. Barriga (Liechtenstein): My delegation would like to thank the Secretary-General for his excellent report on the work of the Organization (A/61/1 and Corr.1). That document is more than just an internal assessment of the management of an organization; indeed, it is a report that reflects the state of the world and outlines ways in which the Organization and Member States can tackle a broad range of global challenges. The General Assembly has a central role to play in that regard. Therefore, I would like to outline our assessment as to how this organ should, over the next few months, contribute to the success of the Organization.

While the issue of development in all its aspects continues to figure very high on the agenda of the General Assembly, there is only so much that the Assembly can add to its past work, including the 2005 World Summit Outcome (resolution 60/1). We agree with the Secretary-General's statement that, if history judges 2005 in terms of promises, then 2006 must be judged in terms of implementation. Rather than adding more words to the already very impressive existing repertoire of commitments and declarations, the sixty-

first session of the General Assembly should set the stage for implementation and its evaluation. That is a very difficult task, particularly in light of the fact that many important decisions affecting the development agenda are being taken outside the framework of the Assembly. In this respect, we note with particular concern the suspension of negotiations of the Doha Development Round.

Regarding the issue of environmental protection and system-wide coherence in the areas of development, humanitarian affairs and the environment, we hope that this session will bring steady progress and thereby contribute to structural changes that will be beneficial in the long term. We must find ways of simplifying and streamlining the existing institutional framework, in order to allow for more effective use of resources, optimize synergies and make the system more transparent and more accessible. The area of conflict prevention also falls into the category of topics where we have seen many words, but are still awaiting real action. We recently received the Secretary-General's report on this matter and adopted a landmark resolution on conflict prevention at the fifty-seventh session. This session should, therefore, focus on how to strengthen the tools available to the United Nations in the area of conflict prevention. We congratulate the Department of Political Affairs for its groundbreaking work aimed at supporting mediation efforts more systematically. This is a core task of this Organization to which the General Assembly must devote more resources from its regular budget.

Liechtenstein welcomes the recent adoption of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. That document underlines our resolve to cooperate in the fight against terrorism, and it represents another example of real General Assembly revitalization, which would evidence itself in the adoption of important decisions. We hope that Member States will now be ready to take the next step on this matter and overcome the remaining disagreement on the draft comprehensive convention. The outstanding issues have to do less with the words proposed and their legal effect than with their political interpretation. Only a concerted effort at the highest levels will, therefore, bring us closer to success. On the issues of disarmament and non-proliferation, as well as the problem of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, it is time to pick up the pieces and start anew.

The spirit of cooperation that has prevailed in our efforts aimed at preventing terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction should also inspire the multilateral negotiations on disarmament. The previous session brought uneven promises in these areas, let alone implementation.

Liechtenstein is very pleased that the initiative to consider the agenda item on the rule of law at the international and national levels has been received very favourably by other Member States. This new item closes a gap in the agenda of the Assembly, which was rather surprising, given the importance that Member States and the Secretary-General have placed on this topic in the past. We expect that the Assembly's debate of that item will in the long run lead to stronger United Nations action in this area, in particular in capacity-building for the improved incorporation of international law into domestic law. Furthermore, we expect that this session will continue to strengthen the cooperative relationship between the United Nations and the International Criminal Court. Much remains to be done to improve the mutual understanding of the respective roles of these two organizations, which can lead to great synergy. These should yield concrete results in the area of investigation and prosecution, including on the matter referred to the Prosecutor by the Security Council.

Human rights have for long been declared to have entered the era of implementation, which remains true, but United Nations work in this area is also subject to intensive reform efforts. This session provides us with an opportunity to continue strengthening the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and to further develop our thinking about the reform of the human rights treaty body system. The work of the Human Rights Council needs to find the correct relationship with the General Assembly, and we trust that this will reflect the great expectations that we all have placed on this new body.

While we have made a lot of progress in the humanitarian area in 2005, in particular through the establishment of the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), great challenges remain. This session should devote strong efforts to furthering a more even-handed approach in the delivery of humanitarian aid and the protection of civilians. Progress in this area would certainly be easier to achieve if the Assembly could streamline the consideration of agenda items concerning humanitarian affairs.

On Security Council reform, we note that there is at least a minimal consensus: something must be done about it. While we are satisfied that the initiative we have undertaken together with the other members of the group of five small countries is showing some positive effects, we believe that the Assembly should also resume serious debate on the issue of enlargement. This will only be possible if some of the entrenched positions from the past are abandoned in favour of new and more pragmatic thinking. Past experience has shown that this is an area that needs strong leadership, and we look forward to working with you on this matter.

Management reform, mandate review and other administrative matters affecting the Secretariat must be tackled in a manner that avoids micromanagement and which takes into account that this Organization is no longer just a conference-servicing facility. Progress is also needed on the question of the financing of the Capital Master Plan.

General Assembly revitalization is more than a technical matter; it is a matter of political will. Nevertheless, implementation of past resolutions on General Assembly revitalization requires institutional knowledge and should be coordinated by a focal point in the Office of the President of the General Assembly. As for the non-technical matters, it is up to the Member States to make good use of our meeting time at the sixty-first session in order to come up with decisions and resolutions of real relevance. The topics just outlined provide us with more than enough material to do so.

Ms. Blum (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me, first of all, to congratulate you for the fine manner in which you are conducting this Assembly's debates. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for presenting his report on the work of the Organization.

My delegation recognizes that progress has been made in achieving the Millennium Development Goals. The annexes to the Secretary-General's report show that progress has occurred in all regions of the world, even if it has been at different speeds. Nonetheless, there is still much to be done. Greater political will is needed to move from commitments to action, particularly in the mobilization of official development assistance and in the liberalization of international markets to allow broad equitable access to them. In

Colombia, as was mentioned recently by President Uribe in this forum,

"Social cohesion, overcoming poverty and building equity are essential aspirations of our democracy. In 2002, poverty reached almost 60 per cent of the population; in 2005 it was down to 49 per cent. We will do everything possible for it not to exceed 35 per cent by 2010 and to reach the goal of 15 per cent by 2019 ..."
(A/61/PV.14)

Over the next four years, we are determined to reach full coverage in basic education and health care, as well as making progress in basic sanitation by massively broadening housing programmes for low-income populations in rural and urban areas. Five million families will be able to benefit from microcredit programmes.

Such efforts in Colombia and other developing countries require a favourable international environment and technical and financial assistance in a number of priority areas. Therefore, it is essential that the international community tackle Millennium Development Goal 8 and all its targets with greater decisiveness and commitment. We reiterate the importance of creating the conditions necessary to relaunch and conclude the Doha round of negotiations.

The establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission represents an important step to prevent countries from falling back into conflict, among other objectives. We hope that the work of the Commission will fulfil the promise of more effective and trustworthy results in that area.

Colombia acknowledges the progress made in the fight against terrorism since the 2005 World Summit, when terrorism was condemned in all its forms and manifestations, by whomever, wherever and for whatever purpose committed. Colombia participated actively in the establishment of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, and we will continue to contribute to its follow-up and implementation. We welcome the establishment of the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force, referred to in the report of the Secretary-General. We also support the initiative to establish a focal point in the Secretariat to coordinate a civil society campaign to fight terrorism.

Colombia emphasizes the need to attack the sources terrorism financing. Therefore, we are pleased that the Counter-Terrorism Strategy calls for stepped up cooperation to deal with crimes that could be related to terrorism, such as the trafficking in illicit drugs and the illicit trade in small arms, among other manifestations of transnational organized crime.

As indicated in the report of the Secretary-General, the proliferation of small arms remains a threat in many regions of the world. Unfortunately, the results of the recent meeting held to review the implementation of the Programme of Action in this area were discouraging. Colombia will continue to insist on such implementation, which we will propose once again during the substantive session of the First Committee.

Colombia values the role of the United Nations in the area of humanitarian assistance. We acknowledge the results achieved in recent years — including the establishment of the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) as a contribution to timely responses to sudden emergency situations. The new cluster approach must be studied by Member States, which are awaiting a detailed report on the proposal from the Secretariat. In any case, the work of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs must be guided by the needs of the States with which it is cooperating and must always have their consent.

Humanitarian assistance, if it is to be efficient and effective, must be governed by the guiding principles of impartiality, neutrality and humanity. There must be accountability to Member States through the General Assembly. In this area, Colombia accords special recognition to the work of the International Committee of the Red Cross, from which the United Nations system can draw important lessons.

In that connection, Colombia attaches vital importance to timely consultation between the system's agencies and the Governments of countries where they maintain a presence, so as to ensure that United Nations humanitarian programmes and activities are in keeping with national plans and policies. The same criterion must be applied to conflict prevention activities. Dialogue and close coordination with States ensure the sustainability of humanitarian assistance, to the benefit of affected populations.

The strengthening of United Nations intergovernmental mechanisms is an objective to which

Colombia is fully committed. My country will continue to take an active part in the various reform processes and will strive to ensure that they result in a more transparent, representative, effective and efficient Organization.

We await with interest the report on system-wide coherence. We trust that it will contain specific recommendations that will make it possible to correct the system's fragmentation and improve its functioning, while maintaining the autonomy and integrity of each of its main components: the environment, humanitarian assistance and development. Particular emphasis should be given to the Organization's capacity to support the attainment of development objectives, including the Millennium Goals.

In the section in his report on global constituencies, the Secretary-General stresses the importance of civil society in the international arena. In Colombia, civil society participates actively in various processes and debates, and all points of view are guaranteed a voice within a framework of broad and democratic representation. Therefore, we also support the participation of civil society in its role of complementing and supporting United Nations processes, in accordance with the procedures and requirements established by the Economic and Social Council.

To conclude, I should like to express the gratitude of the Government of Colombia for the efforts of the Secretary-General. His work has not been easy. His accomplishments have been many during his tenure, which is an important legacy, given the many challenges that we must still face.

Mr. Choisuren (Mongolia): Today, at this plenary meeting, we have an opportunity to examine the tenth annual report on the work of the Organization (A/61/1 and Corr.1), submitted by the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan. Let me join those who have paid tribute to Mr. Annan for his far-sighted vision, his courage, his strength and his tireless efforts to transform the United Nations for the twenty-first century. Under his wise leadership, we have made much progress in implementing the Millennium Declaration and its road map, the 2005 World Summit Outcome (resolution 60/1).

As we are making the United Nations a truly global service provider, we need to do our utmost to

meet the challenges of a changing world. My delegation thanks the Secretary-General for organizing his report around four core areas corresponding to the 2005 World Summit Outcome, in addition to a fifth, "global constituencies".

Mongolia attaches great significance to the development pillar of the United Nations system. During the general debate, my Prime Minister discussed our national efforts and measures aimed at more comprehensive implementation of our commitments under the Millennium Declaration and the 2005 World Summit Outcome.

I would like to express our appreciation to the United Nations country team in Mongolia for its partnership in our endeavour to implement the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Next year, we will begin to implement the new five-year United Nations development assistance framework, which was prepared through a very close consultative process on the basis of the Mongolian Government's socio-economic action plan, with the focused aim of achieving the MDGs.

We support the proposal, made by the Secretary-General in his report, to introduce new targets under Goals 1 and 5. Ensuring full and productive employment of the population is one of my Government's top priorities.

The role of the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security has expanded significantly during the past year. The crisis in Lebanon, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's missile test, the issue of Iran's nuclear programme — the international community has continued to rely on the United Nations to resolve all these challenges.

The peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding activities of the United Nations have grown to represent a truly global service in the past decade. It is also heartening to note that Blue Helmets from developing countries are shouldering most of the responsibilities of that service in United Nations peacekeeping missions.

Mongolia is also actively participating in United Nations peacekeeping operations. Earlier this year, 250 Mongolian peacekeepers took part, for the first time, in a United Nations-mandated peacekeeping operation. Although Mongolia is a newcomer, last May my

country's peacekeeping contribution ranked it 39th out of 109 troop-contributing Member States.

As United Nations peacekeeping operations become more efficient, effective and complex, we are doing our best to be ready to provide not only troops but other personnel necessary for United Nations peacekeeping operations.

We are grateful to the Secretary-General and the Advisory Board for having recently approved financing from the United Nations Democracy Fund for Mongolia's proposed project. The project will contribute towards the achievement at the national level of additional Millennium Development Goal 9 on strengthening human rights and fostering democratic governance. Since democratic and sound governance is the overarching framework for achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), we strongly believe that the incorporation of MDG 9 into the set of global targets would be very practical. Mongolia's MDG 9 actions have related goals, including ensuring respect for human rights, democratic governance and zero tolerance for corruption. We have recently contributed our modest share to the United Nations Democracy Fund.

The Secretary-General's observation in his report that the International Conference of New or Restored Democracies is a forum for supporting democracy among 120 countries is a valid assessment of the work Mongolia has done over the past three years in its capacity as chair of the Fifth Conference. Mongolia will continue its endeavours to promote democratic values at the international level through its active participation in the Community of Democracies and in other forums. My country will report on its activities and hand over the Conference's chairmanship to Qatar, which will be hosting the Sixth Conference in less than one month's time and will be chairing the movement.

The sixtieth session of the General Assembly will be regarded as a memorable one, for it saw the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission, the Human Rights Council and the Central Emergency Response Fund and the adoption of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. In that regard, I would like to pay tribute to Mr. Jan Eliasson, former President of the General Assembly, for his able leadership.

Secretary-General Kofi Annan's reports — "A Programme for Reform", in 1997; "Strengthening the United Nations: An Agenda for Further Change", in

2002; "In Larger Freedom", in 2005; and "Investing in the United Nations", in 2006 — were crucial reform documents in the process of strengthening the Organization. His sweeping reform package, contained in those reports, has helped the United Nations and its Secretariat to be prepared to meet the requirements of the twenty-first century and address new challenges. It is commendable that administrative and organizational reform measures falling under the authority of the Secretary-General have been largely implemented or set in motion. My delegation is confident that the next Secretary-General will bring the United Nations reform process to new levels.

The 2005 World Summit Outcome Document outlined the need for a more effective, efficient, coherent, coordinated and better-performing United Nations country presence. Mongolia is very interested in initiatives that strengthen the United Nations country presence through such innovative ideas as "one United Nations, one programme and one team." In that regard, we look forward to the Secretary-General's recommendations on system-wide coherence in the areas of development, humanitarian assistance and the environment.

In the context of the strengthening of the United Nations, we support the Secretary-General's call for recognizing the voices of civil society and the private sector as responsible global constituencies. If their contribution is well channelled, they can constitute a valuable asset in our work that can contribute towards bringing about a more secure, prosperous and just world.

Mongolia supports a stronger and more structured relationship between the United Nations and regional organizations. Mongolia is endeavouring to play a broader and more active role in such regional organizations as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Regional Forum, the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the Asian Cooperation Dialogue. We have also reached out, for the first time, to the European regional structure, and we recently became the fifth Asian partner of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

Furthermore, let me extend our gratitude to those Member States that have supported us in joining the Asia-Europe Meeting this year. We hope that our long-

time aspiration to become a member of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation will be fulfilled next year, with the help of the countries of the region.

Mongolia cannot but worry about the security uncertainties prevailing in North-East Asia. The subregion lacks a mechanism to ensure security and stability at the governmental level. It may be time to start thinking about the possibility of engaging in a dialogue at the track 1 level, starting with a free exchange of views within the framework of the General Assembly.

In conclusion, let me note that the general debate held by our leaders has shown that a global partnership is needed more than ever today. A global partnership on development, security and human rights is the only means of achieving the goals set out in the Millennium Declaration and of implementing the 2005 World Summit Outcome, as well as of making progress in the noble work of our Organization.

Mongolia is doing its best to fulfil its duties and responsibilities and expects the global partners to do the same.

Mr. Shinyo: Madam President, I wish to thank you for having convened this meeting to discuss the Secretary-General's report on the work of the Organization. The sixtieth session of the General Assembly was the first year of the implementation of the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document. We saw some progress, with the establishment of the Human Rights Council and the Peacebuilding Commission, and the continued efforts for Secretariat and management reform.

The one item on our agenda that stands out as unfinished is reform of the Security Council. Madam President, it is essential that, guided by your able leadership, we move forward on all items of the agreement reached by our leaders during the sixtieth session and elucidated in the Outcome Document.

The Secretary-General has asserted on more than one occasion that no reform of the United Nations will be complete without reform of the Security Council. Japan is determined to continue to take the initiative on this issue during this session. What Member States need now is a new proposal — one that is both creative and persuasive — in order to reach an early decision on Council reform during the current session of the General Assembly.

Since its accession to the United Nations 50 years ago, Japan has had an exemplary record with regard to the fulfilment of its duties as a Member State, including assessed contributions. Nevertheless, Japan strongly believes that the United Nations needs a reformed scale of assessments structure, one that is more equitable and fair and that duly takes into account the status and responsibilities of each Member State. Japan will work together with other Member States to formulate such a structure, which will bring financial stability to the Organization.

Over the past several years, Japan has been promoting the importance of human security as a concept that stresses the protection of individuals from threats to their life and dignity, as well as the value of their individual empowerment. In partnership with other interested countries, we will continue to promote human security and an approach based on it during this session of the General Assembly. It is now widely acknowledged that peace, development and human rights are interlinked and serve to complement one another. We hold high expectations for the newly created Human Rights Council beginning a new page in the promotion of respect for human rights; as a Council member, Japan will play a constructive role in the Council's activities to that end.

Japan is also committed to implementing the arrangements outlined in the 2005 World Summit Outcome (resolution 60/1) and continues to make efforts towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals. In this connection, we, together with like-minded countries, will propose a draft resolution on an international year of sanitation to promote progress in the area of water and sanitation. We also have dedicated ourselves to realizing reforms aimed at enabling the United Nations development system to contribute to providing more effective service to the people and the communities that are the final beneficiaries of the system. We believe that the proposals by the High-level Panel on United Nations System-wide Coherence will give us important guidance in that regard.

Our common task for the sixty-first session of the General Assembly is to continue our earnest efforts to translate into reality the decisions on reform made at the 2005 World Summit. You have our assurance, Madam President, that you can count on Japan's proactive support on our continuing journey towards a more efficient and effective United Nations.

Mr. Malmierca Díaz (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the Cuban delegation, Madam President, I would like once again to congratulate you upon your election and to offer you our support. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for the submission of his annual report (A/61/1), the tenth and last one of his term of office. This document is a very useful guideline for an open and frank exchange on the current work and the prospects of the United Nations.

We are convinced that defending the United Nations is more critical than ever. We defend the need both for its existence and for in-depth reform and democratization. But we must do this with respect for the Charter, not by rewriting it or distorting its purposes and principles. The challenge is to reform the United Nations so that it can serve equally the interests of all nations. We cannot allow the reform to fail ignominiously in a bureaucratic process of adapting what remains of the United Nations to the interests and whims of a few rich and powerful countries. The primacy, absolute validity and inviolability of the Charter, which is not one among many sources of law but the cornerstone of this Organization and of the precarious current international order, must be re-established.

The current unjust and tremendously inequitable international order must not be succeeded by a more primitive order based on a unilateral reinterpretation of the Charter and of international law. We completely agree with the Secretary-General about the importance of strengthening the work of the United Nations in conflict prevention. History unequivocally proves that peace cannot be imposed by force or by war and that military operations do not yield lasting solutions. History has also demonstrated that it is impossible to establish an effective conflict prevention strategy without taking steps to fight poverty, underdevelopment and economic and social inequality.

The United Nations Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2) committed us to work towards modest — and insufficient — goals. Nevertheless, more than five years after their adoption, those goals are far from being met. Reality cannot be concealed by arithmetical juggling acts. The world's serious economic and social problems, particularly in developing countries, continue growing at an alarming rate.

Every year, 11 million children die before their first birthday and 19 million children under five years of age die from curable diseases and malnutrition. Another 325 million children do not attend school, while more than \$1 trillion are spent every year on commercial publicity. The number of hungry people is already 852 million, while every year the developed countries spend \$17 billion on pet food. If the underdevelopment and poverty in which four fifths of humanity live are not rectified, if more than 1.1 billion people are not brought out of extreme poverty, if the 39 million AIDS patients are not cured and if 900 million human beings are not taught how to read and write, there will be no sustainable development and conflicts will continue. If the negative effects of the imposition of a neoliberal model on a globalized world are not duly tackled and the gap between the rich and the poor continues to increase, we will inevitably witness increased crises and conflicts.

Although the report does not say it, the truth is that for every dollar of official development assistance, six dollars are taken from our countries to service a debt that we have paid many times over but which is always multiplying. The external debt, which last year reached a record \$2.8 trillion, must be eliminated. The promise of 0.7 per cent of gross national product in official development assistance must be kept. The intellectual property monopoly on pharmaceuticals that are indispensable for life must end. Unfortunately, the industrialized world has apparently not become aware of all this, and the lack of political will continues. The failure of the Doha development round is a telling case in point.

Let us hope that the unjust, unsustainable and tyrannical world order that we, the countries of the South, suffer can be redesigned by negotiating in one of this building's conference rooms. But let us not harbour false hopes. In fact, we have had many experiences in this Hall of unfulfilled agreements, empty promises and broken hopes. The current international economic system is not only tremendously unjust but also absolutely unsustainable. An economic system that destroys the environment cannot be sustained. The Secretary-General's report provides a very distressing figure: 60 per cent of the world's ecosystems are degrading or are being used in an unsustainable manner. The availability of drinking water is currently 60 per cent of what it was in 1970, and today we are 2.3 billion human beings more than

then. The same is happening to the forests. Environmental degradation related to the irrational consumption by the industrialized countries has a common fate in store for us, poor or rich.

Despite the proclaimed end of the cold war, military expenditures are on the rise. There are still about 33,000 nuclear weapons in the world, over 13,000 of which are ready to be used immediately with the power to destroy the planet several times over.

With just 10 per cent of the more than \$1 trillion allocated to military expenditures, the Millennium Development Goals could be achieved. Cuba reiterates its proposal to devote at least half of current military expenditures to meet the needs of economic and social development, through a fund managed by the United Nations.

As we see in the report of the Secretary-General, over 70 per cent of the United Nations annual budget of \$10 billion is currently devoted to peacekeeping operations. Just 10 years ago, only 50 per cent of a budget less than half of the current one was devoted to peacekeeping.

The establishment of peacekeeping operations should not overlook the analysis and solution of the root causes of conflicts. Otherwise, we will not be able to break the vicious cycle of new conflicts and operations, with the high human and material costs that they incur.

In the next few months we will analyze a new set of reform-related proposals presented by the Secretary-General; Cuba will actively participate in this process. Be warned that we will not endorse proposals that run counter to the mandates given by the General Assembly and other organs.

We are struck that the annual report fails to mention the difficulties faced by the Secretariat in recent years owing to the lack of resources to implement its mandates. It also fails to mention the negative impact of the establishment of a cap on expenditures.

With respect to the mandate review process, Cuba's position will follow the tenets agreed to in the Final Document of the Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement, which was held with great success last September in Havana.

The United Nations should be democratized urgently. We have to strengthen the governing role of the General Assembly, the only United Nations organ with no place for hegemonies, where we all have a right to vote and where there is no obsolete and unjust right of veto. We cannot talk about a true reform when the Assembly does not fully exercise the powers vested in it by the Charter, including the ones related to keeping international peace and security.

The Security Council must be rescued from discredit and doubts that burden it today and with good reason. It must be transformed in a truly representative and democratic organ — it should have proper representation from the Third World and become truly democratic. It must eliminate the veto and other anti-democratic practices. It should also become a transparent organ by putting an end to the secret meetings and decisions made behind the scenes by a few and imposed on the rest of us. Unfortunately we must be blunt — the Security Council reform seems as remote today as in the beginning.

The functions and prerogatives that the Charter confers respectively to the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council must be respected. We must put an end to the growing meddling of the Security Council in areas that are not part of its mandate. Regarding system-wide coherence, we support a greater coordination and coherence between the bodies so as to avoid duplications or unnecessary overlapping, thus maximizing their efficiency, without this necessarily meaning common frameworks of management or programming at the field level.

We do not agree with the idea of the possible merger of funds and programmes. We feel that it is necessary to preserve the separation of the two identities. The funds and programmes should answer, first of all, to the national development priorities and should respect the mandates given to them by the Member States.

We are pleased with the General Assembly's adoption on 8 September of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. We hope that from now on this Strategy will be a guideline for our actions against this scourge in an atmosphere of cooperation.

We agree with the Secretary-General in acknowledging how instrumental the United Nations can be in supporting the efforts of all countries to

strengthen and consolidate democracy, but this can be done only on the basis of unqualified respect for the principles and purposes of the Charter and international law. The existence of common elements in the diversity of forms of democracy does not justify the attempts by some to foster exclusive and anti-democratic movements and organizations to impose new instruments of domination.

The political manipulation of human rights — the selectivity, partiality and double standards in the imposition of sectarian models — must cease. We have a sacred duty to work to protect and promote all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, given the attempts of some to mutilate, rewrite and reinterpret those rights and freedoms, adapting them to fit the unipolar order and hegemonic interests of the few.

Hence, in the Human Rights Council and other intergovernmental forums, we will carefully review the different proposals on the reform of the human rights machinery, including the plan of action of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Action 2 Initiative of the Secretary-General, in order to ensure their ability to resist political manipulation and to maintain objectivity, impartiality, non-selectivity and the universality of human rights.

I would like to conclude with a note of hope and optimism. There are very serious challenges ahead of us, but in working together our chances to achieve progress are endless. The United Nations needs us and we need the United Nations. As the Secretary-General expressed in his report,

“The effort to make the United Nations a more effective instrument of its members’ collective will is one that is of vital importance for people around the world.” (A/61/1, para. 160)

Mr. Liu Zhenmin (China) (spoke in Chinese): The Chinese delegation wishes to thank the Secretary-General, Mr. Annan for his report on the work of the Organization. The report provides an overview of the work of the United Nations during the past year and contains an array of views and recommendations on ways to address the challenges facing us today. As the last report on the work of the Organization before the expiration of Secretary-General Annan’s term of office, it also evaluates the major developments in the work of the United Nations over the past ten years. Please allow me to take this opportunity to express my appreciation and gratitude to

Secretary-General Annan for his assiduous efforts and his outstanding actions.

In this statement, I would like to focus on three points in connection with the recently concluded general debate.

First, on the reform of the United Nations and implementation of the World Summit Outcome Document, the United Nations underwent, during the past year, an important reform process. Efforts are now under way at the national level to implement the commitments made in the Summit Outcome Document. As is stated in the report of the Secretary-General,

“If history judges 2005 for its promises, then 2006 must be judged on implementation.” (A/61/1, para. 27)

Various results were achieved during the past year: the establishment of the Peace Building Commission, the Human Rights Council and the Central Emergency Response Fund; efforts to revitalize the General Assembly; and the adoption of a resolution on a global counter-terrorism strategy. These all testify to the commitment of Member States to broad consensus and unity in the reform process in order to meet the ever-increasing challenges.

China has consistently supported necessary United Nations reforms so as to strengthen the Organization’s role in the new era. The reform should be conducive to safeguarding the purposes and principles of the Charter and to promoting unity and cooperation among Member States and the overall interests of the United Nations membership. United Nations reform should proceed steadily on all fronts and lead to results in all fields, especially in the area of development.

It is clear that developing countries expect United Nations reforms to lead to greater achievements in the field of development. Reforms in that field will affect the future of the United Nations. China believes that the reform effort should next focus on development so as to fully respond to developing countries’ concerns and promote the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

All Member States must strive for consensus on issues through consultations and a democratic approach. They should exercise caution when addressing controversial major issues and avoid forceful actions which will lead only to greater division

and undermine hard-won reform results. Reform is a long-term undertaking. We hope that all sides will fulfil the commitments set out in the Summit Outcome Document and push the reform process in the right direction.

Secondly, with regard to peace and security, peace, development and cooperation have become the main preoccupation of our times. However, numerous recent events have shown that the world is far from peaceful. Regional conflicts occur frequently and problems relating to certain regional hot spots are on the rise. United Nations peace efforts have achieved remarkable success in Burundi and Sierra Leone, and peacekeeping operations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in Liberia have also yielded positive results. Mediation efforts relating to the questions of Cyprus and Kosovo in Serbia, are under way. However, the Iranian nuclear issue, the nuclear issue of the Korean peninsula, and the Lebanese-Israeli conflict in the Middle East swiftly draw wide attention, testing the ability and the unity of the United Nations and the international community. China believes, as always, that it is necessary to resolve these disputes by peaceful means through negotiation, consultation and other diplomatic approaches, in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter.

The Middle East peace process is at an impasse and is a source of concern. The Palestinian-Israeli question, the Lebanese-Israeli question, the Syrian-Lebanese question and the question of Iraq are interwoven and threaten world peace and security and the role and authority of the United Nations. The United Nations must act. As the Palestinian question is at the core of the Middle East question, the peace process must be relaunched, on the basis of relevant United Nations resolutions and the principle of land for peace, with a view to arriving at a comprehensive solution of the Middle East question, including the Palestinian-Israeli question, as soon as possible, and to enabling the parties involved to coexist in harmony and lasting peace in the region.

The question of Darfur, the Sudan, involves many complex factors. The international community must take a responsible attitude. The Darfur Peace Agreement provides a historic opportunity; the international community should take advantage of that opportunity to promote a return to peace and stability in Darfur. It is imperative to urge the parties concerned to promptly ratify and fully implement the Peace

Agreement. China supports the handover to the United Nations of the African Union Mission in the Sudan in the Darfur region, but in order to ensure the success of the peacekeeping operation, the prior consent of the Sudanese Government must be obtained.

The fields of international arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation present opportunities as well as challenges. Under the new circumstances, the international community should adopt a new security concept, advocate multilateralism and address new security challenges through multilateral cooperation. China favours maintaining the international nuclear non-proliferation regime. We oppose the proliferation of nuclear weapons. At the same time, the legitimate rights of countries in the context of the peaceful use of nuclear energy should be fully respected, as long as they fulfil their relevant international obligations.

The General Assembly recently launched the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (resolution 60/288), thereby sending an important and positive political signal to the world that the United Nations is united and active on the question of counter-terrorism. However, rampant terrorist attacks remain a formidable challenge to the international community. Combating terrorism remains a long, uphill journey. The United Nations should play a major role in this field. The Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy should be a living strategy, to be further developed and refined as the situation evolves.

Thirdly, with regard to development, in the Millennium Declaration of 2000, world leaders set forth a bold and inclusive new vision for human development. The World Summit last year made important commitments in the context of a global development agenda and a global partnership for development. However, progress in terms of implementation is falling short of expectations, and humankind is still plagued by problems such as abject poverty, a development imbalance between the North and the South, the spread of HIV/AIDS and environmental degradation.

The international community, especially the developed countries, should increase its aid, promote international trade, technology transfers and investment, provide more debt relief and greater assistance to developing countries and respect developing countries' ownership with regard to issues

concerning their own development. The United Nations should play a fuller role in development and create an environment in which developing countries in general, as well as those with special needs, can benefit.

The Doha round of negotiations is at an impasse — a situation that is highly detrimental to the steady growth of the world economy and the orderly development of international trade. Negotiations should resume as soon as possible. The major developed countries should demonstrate political will and push for the early resumption of the talks in a more flexible spirit. The Doha round is a development round, and should therefore give full prominence to the theme of development and ensure special and differentiated treatment for developing countries so that they can fully benefit from the multilateral trading system and achieve their development goals.

The United Nations will soon elect a new chief administrative officer. China firmly supports the idea that the next Secretary-General should come from Asia. We are confident that Asia is capable of producing a competent candidate who enjoys high standing and is acceptable to all.

China stands ready to participate in the forthcoming negotiations on the scale of assessments in a constructive spirit based on the principle of capacity to pay. We hope that a fair and reasonable formula will be arrived at through extensive consultations.

Broad consensus has already been achieved on the need to strengthen multilateralism and enhance the role of the United Nations. This is also the approach chosen by the international community in order to effectively meet existing challenges.

The United Nations has gone through more than 60 years of trials and tribulations; its important role in various fields is all too obvious. In future, it will be only through collective efforts to maintain multilateral machinery, with the United Nations at its core, that the leading role of the Organization in international affairs can be enhanced and that its ability to address all manner of threats and challenges can be consolidated.

Mr. Hill (Australia): First, I want to thank the Secretary-General, not only for his report but also for his outstanding contribution to the international community over the last 10 years, particularly to the weak and disadvantaged, those who most need the support of this international body.

On development, the Millennium Declaration sets goals, and goals and reference points are important, but the real test is implementation and outcomes. I am pleased that the emphasis has moved, and the United Nations, as a truly global service provider, as described by the Secretary-General, is an important player. But progress in achieving our goals depends on the commitment of States and, beyond States, civil society.

The Secretary-General can be pleased that there is renewed determination to improve the lot of the poor and those who are suffering. He can also be pleased by the partnerships between international bodies, States, business and the community, which are now tackling these issues. He should also be pleased at the new emphasis on longer-term, sustainable benefit. New institutions, such as the Peacebuilding Commission, also can contribute to meeting those goals.

Peacemaking and peacekeeping have expanded rapidly under this Secretary-General — and that is good — but, as we have learned, the benefits will soon be lost unless they are entrenched through nation-building, economic growth, an improved standard of living for the peoples affected and a respect for human rights.

Globalization might be the phenomenon of our age, and it has particularly marked the tenure of the Secretary-General. The Secretary-General has noted the irony. The United Nations was designed as a body to assist in the relationship between States. But, as States have been joined by so many other players in international affairs, the role of the United Nations has become more, rather than less, important.

In this complex international environment, with all its threats and opportunities, the international community has looked to the United Nations to find the answers. The development of the principle of "responsibility to protect", which crosses State boundaries in circumstances where the international community demands action, is a contemporary response to that changing world. The Secretary-General correctly reminds us that,

"States, in short, are the servants and instruments of human beings, and not the other way round."
(A/61/1, para. 10)

It could also be said that with sovereignty comes responsibility. And, as the Secretary-General says,

development, security and human rights are indissolubly interconnected, and it is the responsibility of the State to deliver on all three. The United Nations can help States meet their responsibilities to their peoples. It can set standards, it can demand adherence and it can also provide practical support.

The challenge to do so in this globalized world is as great as ever. I was pleased that the Secretary-General recognized again that in order to maximize its contribution to these goals the United Nations must be updated, renewed and reinvigorated. That is not only the responsibility of the staff of the United Nations, to whom the Secretary-General has paid justifiable credit, but also of us, the Member States. Without an efficient and effective United Nations system, including a sharpening of mandates and coherent structure, the United Nations will fall short of what is achievable.

I wanted to conclude with mention of the two great contemporary challenges, namely, countering terrorism and responding to the proliferation of weapons and weapon systems. On terrorism, more can and must be done, as the Secretary-General's recent report, "Uniting against terrorism", makes clear. Australia supports his recommendations. In particular, every effort must be made to ensure that terrorists are not able to acquire weapons of mass destruction.

On non-proliferation, we must also make greater efforts. In recent times, the international community has seen many opportunities to make our world more secure through multilateral action on non-proliferation and disarmament. But, as the Secretary-General has pointed out, we have all but squandered these opportunities. We failed to reach an outcome at the 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). There was no outcome at all on non-proliferation and disarmament at the World Summit. And this year's Small Arms Review Conference could not agree on any follow-up process for the Programme of Action.

Australia continues to support multilateral approaches to non-proliferation and disarmament, including a firmer and more active role for the Security Council in respect of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) proliferation. Treaties such as the NPT and measures such as Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) are fundamental to the forms of WMD non-proliferation and disarmament.

We must also focus again on the practical efforts we can make to strengthen international security. Australia is a strong supporter of the Proliferation Security Initiative and has long advocated measures such as the Additional Protocol, a fissile material cut-off treaty and the Hague Code of Conduct as practical steps against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. We also support proposals for a global arms trade treaty.

In conclusion, the Secretary-General has ably led this Organization in difficult times. We must now accept and meet the challenges he has set for us in this, his tenth and last annual report. We thank him for the values and application he has always brought to his work.

Mr. Arias Cárdenas (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): Madam President, I would like to thank you for convening this meeting and for your excellent stewardship of this session of General Assembly.

The delegation of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela would like to congratulate the United Nations Secretary-General for the work he has achieved since 1997 at the helm of our Organization. The period that Secretary-General Kofi Annan opened at the end of the 1990s has been marked by social and economic changes and events that have highlighted the urgent need to adapt the United Nations to a new global reality. The Secretary-General has interpreted this to mean that we must have a United Nations reform that would identify major themes and paths in order to meet this need.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, like all the other countries of this Organization, is committed to social justice, peace and security and to the overall process of reform of the United Nations. We must establish priorities for the urgent reform of the Security Council, which should take place without delay. The actions of that body in recent years have made that imperative, as on repeated occasions powerful unilateralism has prevented that body from acting in accordance with the functions granted to it by the United Nations Charter. The Secretary-General himself commented on the delay in decision-making during the Middle East crisis, saying that credibility of the United Nations was at stake.

This unilateralism in Security Council decision-making makes the Organization a mere spectator of

death and despair. It makes all of us accomplices of terror. Both large and small countries took the decision of a single country. Of course, Security Council reform is required with a view to ensuring that this important body becomes more effective, more legitimate, more democratic, achieving equality among its members. A more democratic and participatory Security Council is required in order to comply in a more effective and timely fashion with the main objective given to it by the Charter: to maintain international peace and security in accordance with the purposes and principles of nations.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela reiterates its position that the search for peaceful solutions to disputes affecting international peace and security must be found within the framework of the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, namely non-intervention in the internal affairs of States, the sovereign equality of States, refraining from using threats or force against the territorial integrity or the political independence of any State and respect for sovereignty. We have affirmed and emphasized the need to strengthen the powers of the General Assembly, given its status as the main deliberative body that adopts policies and that represents our Organization. This is another necessary requirement stated in the Millennium Declaration.

We would like to highlight the interest with which this Organization has been working on recognizing the special needs of Africa in establishing policies to attack HIV/AIDS and to protect the environment. This will undoubtedly be a historic legacy of the Secretary-General's stewardship. These questions were tackled with interest by the Member States, and that is proof that political differences can be overcome when the objective is to achieve improvement in the well-being of mankind. The twenty-first century requires from the world a greater and better commitment to a just and comprehensive development of all the peoples of the South with special attention given to those who face greater needs and difficulties. The struggle for development is the true covenant of peace and its achievement is the death of war and terror.

Terrorism is a challenge that requires joint action. Our delegation believes that the adoption of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy is an important first step towards bringing together in the future more robust and coordinated actions to tackle

this phenomenon at the global level. The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy should be the start of a much broader negotiation to make possible the achievement of a concept of terrorism with which all the Member States can fully identify, as well as the recognition and all-out struggle against the social, economic and political causes that foster terrorism and its development.

Reform of the Economic and Social Council must be based on the right to development as that would make it possible to establish machinery aimed at guaranteeing compatibility with the Council's programmes and activities through concrete actions to overcome marginalization, hunger and poverty for millions of people.

The United Nations must design and implement measures that would oblige the main economic and financial bodies to exert greater efforts to formulate better policies to help curb the broadening gap between developed and developing countries, as well as permit the establishment of effective machinery related to the debt problem, trade preferences, technical cooperation and the promotion of national capacities.

Concerning the Organization's budget, higher-income countries that have not complied with their responsibilities to the Organization in this respect must assume their commitment to honour their debt, thus making it possible to improve the operation of our Organization and promote the objectives of the Charter.

I am pleased to inform the Assembly that the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has honoured all its commitments related to contributions to the Organization's regular budget, its peacekeeping operations budget, the International Criminal Tribunals for Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia, the United Nations Capital Master Plan and United Nations funds and programmes.

With respect to the mandate review, we would like to reiterate that this exercise should be limited to mandates that have not been renewed for over five years. This review should be completed this year as agreed. We should not allow the exercise to weaken our capacity, taking up the time of our delegates, while parallel negotiations are being carried out on other matters that are of vital importance.

It is crucial that we not weaken the ability of the General Assembly to decide on administrative and

budgetary matters of the Organization. Likewise, the Secretary-General's report on the broad review of the management and supervision of funds, programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations should be submitted to the Fifth Committee, following the usual procedures.

We will not be able to comply with the Charter while within our Organization positions still persist that deny the right to development. This is an inalienable human right by which every human being is empowered to take part in political, cultural, social and economic development and by which they can fully enjoy their fundamental freedoms and contribute to this development and enjoy it. In this context, our delegation shares the view expressed by the Secretary-General about the need to strengthen the United Nations, which is not simply a question of accountability, but rather an imperative for all Member States, which should devote more urgent attention to it than they have so far.

Lastly, the delegation of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela would like to reiterate its congratulations to Secretary-General Kofi Annan for his stewardship of our Organization and the legacy that he has left it.

Mr. Hamidon (Malaysia): The report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (A/61/1 and Corr.1) that is before us illustrates the challenges and tasks facing this Organization.

As outlined by its Charter, the main purpose of the Organization is the maintenance of international peace and security. By and large, this has been achieved. However, in the Middle East the problems, in particular the Palestinian question, remain unresolved. The devastation wrought on Gaza, Baghdad and Lebanon has left an indelible impression on Muslims worldwide of the complicity of the West to humiliate them. This fans the feelings of outrage and anger, which often erupt into violence.

It is imperative that a comprehensive solution to the Middle East crisis be found. No one party or country can determine how the Middle East is to be redrawn and reshaped. The views of all those concerned have to be addressed. In this regard, my delegation feels that the United Nations could play a more pronounced and decisive role, as envisioned by its Charter, by bringing together all parties concerned to the negotiating table.

As the bastion of multilateralism, the United Nations has to rise to the challenge of safeguarding the interests of developing countries. Millions of the poor, the hungry and the destitute in the South expect the United Nations to play its role in galvanizing support and political will that will bring the benefits of development and globalization to them. In this regard, Madam President, you were prescient in choosing the theme for the Assembly to focus its general debate on last week, namely, "Implementing a global partnership for development".

During the sixtieth session of the General Assembly, we were not able to conclude work on strengthening the Economic and Social Council. This endeavour should now be our priority, and an early outcome should be reached at the current session. We should not forget that at the 2005 World Summit our leaders had reaffirmed the importance of an effective Economic and Social Council as a principal body for coordination, policy review, policy dialogue and recommendations on issues of economic and social development. A strengthened Economic and Social Council is in our interest, so that it can be a pillar in the United Nations system for maintaining economic and social justice, just as the Security Council is responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security.

Another area in which work is still unfinished is reforming the Security Council to make it more representative in terms of its composition and to make it better reflect the world we live in today. It is crucial that we attain those objectives because it would lend legitimacy to the Security Council and to the decisions it takes, which affect the vast majority of us in this Hall who are not represented in the Council.

The sixtieth session of the General Assembly agreed on a resolution on General Assembly revitalization (resolution 60/286). It is my delegation's hope that, at the current session, an ad hoc working group on General Assembly revitalization will meet as a follow-up to that resolution. The Assembly has been deliberating on resolutions relating to General Assembly revitalization for the past 15 years, and it is high time that we concretized, through the ad hoc working group, what we have agreed on, namely, to strengthen the central position of the General Assembly as the chief deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations, and to

strengthen its role in the process of standard-setting and the codification of international law.

Our task in reforming the United Nations is not a one-off process, but a continuous process. To reform the principal organs of the Organization and strengthen the Organization's capacity to handle the many challenges facing it in such fields as human rights, peacekeeping, conflict resolution and humanitarian assistance, it is essential that this House be kept in order. The United Nations must become more efficient and more effective.

In that regard, my delegation reiterates that it is vital for the Organization to secure a healthy and stable financial position in order to ensure that all operations are carried out within the expected time frames and in an efficient manner. We hope that the Member States concerned will honour their assessed contributions and settle their arrears, without any conditions attached.

My delegation will continue to work and cooperate with other delegations on management and Secretariat reform. This process should be all-inclusive, involving all parties, who themselves should be actively engaged, should possess political will, and should be guided by the General Assembly's rules of procedure.

My delegation also acknowledges civil society's positive contributions to the Organization, which have been particularly helpful during the current reform process. We welcome civil society's continued participation in various forums. However, the United Nations is an intergovernmental body, and the participation of civil society should be guided by Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

One issue that we failed to agree upon at the 2005 World Summit is disarmament and non-proliferation. That failure is very disappointing to my delegation since weapons of mass destruction present the greatest threat to all mankind. The situation is further complicated by the failure of the 2005 Review Conference Treaty of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as well as the inability of the 2006 United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action on Small Arms to find a consensus. In the case of the latter, the weapons involved may be small, but we are well aware of their devastating impact on societies. In this sense, they too could be regarded as *de facto* weapons of mass

destruction. We can ill afford another failure at this session to act on these issues.

In conclusion, Madam President, I wish you well as you lead us in our deliberations on the various issues facing the sixty-first session.

Mr. Jenie (Indonesia): Once again we have assembled here to review the work of the United Nations over the past year in furtherance of the objectives of the Charter and the decisions of world leaders. Before I continue, I want to express the appreciation of my delegation to Secretary-General Kofi Annan, not only for providing us with the in-depth examination on the work of the Organization before us, but also for his exemplary service to the United Nations in his 10 years at the helm of the Secretariat.

It is unrealistic, indeed almost impossible, to undertake a review of the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization, contained in document A/61/1, without according due attention to the strides made by the United Nations in the last 10 years. This is because the history of the United Nations in the past year exists only within the context of the past decade.

During that period, under Mr. Annan, the Organization has carried out some of the most fundamental and far-reaching work since the adoption of the Charter. For example, we began a most comprehensive reform process that was designed to ensure that the United Nations is able to respond to the challenges before it and to meet the expectation of the entire membership.

It will be recalled that, in December 1998, by resolution 53/202, the General Assembly designated the fifty-fifth session as the Millennium Assembly of the United Nations. In 2000, that led to the most important single gathering of Member States since the inception of the United Nations: the Millennium Assembly, the follow-up of which was held here just one year ago.

In the Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2), 189 heads of State or Government made the historic commitment to free their fellow citizens from poverty by 2015, nine years from now. Last year's World Summit, which examined the progress made in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals

(MDGs), as well as recent United Nations conferences, reiterated this commitment.

In view of the increased upheavals in global geopolitics, and the uneven progress in the international economic and social fields, the question of the effectiveness of the United Nations looms large. My delegation believes that it is within this context, and in the light of the efforts of Mr. Annan in the past year and throughout his years in office, that we must look at the United Nations and the future. The report before us is a further reminder of what the important issues are and of how far we have gone in addressing them.

We share the view stated by the Secretary-General in this report that the one issue that has dominated the past 10 years must surely be globalization. Economically, globalization is an opportunity that promises improved living conditions for people everywhere. Regrettably, it has yet to fulfil that promise. Indeed, it seems to have continued to favour the developed economies and to amplify the disparity between the haves and the have-nots.

Regrettably, the World Summit not only revealed stunning differences the world over in the implementation of the MDGs, but also gave sober indications that some parts of the world, notably Africa, might not come close to full implementation by the 2015 target date. Indeed, while the report of the Secretary-General observes some positive signs in the reduction of global poverty, it sums up the situation for the majority by noting that the ongoing levels of human deprivation remain staggering.

My delegation notes the Secretary-General's proposal to introduce a new set of targets in the follow-up of the Millennium Declaration and shares his concerns in this regard.

However, we are of the view that having more goals per se does not necessarily lead to development. The key is that agreed commitments and actions be honoured by all relevant entities. We agree with the Secretary-General that 2006, the year following the World Summit, must be judged on its ability to implement the MDGs.

We hope that resolution 60/265, on the follow-up to the development outcome of the World Summit and other internationally agreed development goals, will be acted upon without delay, particularly in our common

endeavour to eradicate poverty. My delegation also looks forward to an action-oriented draft resolution on the reform of the Economic and Social Council that will make the Council robust and truly central in its policy coordination and dialogue roles with all relevant international actors, particularly the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization. In this connection, Indonesia supports the holding of the Development Cooperation Forum and the annual ministerial reviews.

Ultimately, the commitment to development can only be translated into action if developing countries have requisite funds and possess sufficient capacities. Fundamentally, international financial commitments remain inadequate in terms of timing, volume and quality for achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs. Official development assistance, along with debt relief, are important. However, foreign direct investment can greatly help to spur private sector formation. There is a need for higher investment flows to the developing countries. Indonesia agrees with the report's conclusion about good governance and accountability, and fully shares the view that they should be in evidence at both the national and international levels.

Globalization has also contributed to the redefinition of our political and economic realities in terms of the critical issues of security, development and human rights, as well as the links between them.

Unfortunately, various conflicts continue to simmer in different parts of the globe, hampering the path to a stable and prosperous world. It is a travesty that, on the one hand, we face a paucity in financing for development, while on the other, we deal with the reality that the total budget of United Nations peacekeeping is just 0.5 per cent of international military spending. To find peaceful ways out of conflict situations, the role of the United Nations needs to be strengthened, and its mediation capacities made more effective.

We share the concern of the Secretary-General over a series of setbacks in multilateral disarmament in recent years. The lack of progress in pursuing disarmament and non-proliferation objectives is a cause for great distress to all those who aspire to a peaceful and stable world. We believe that it is now high time for renewed efforts to break the impasse in multilateral negotiations and to bring disarmament

issues back into the limelight of the international agenda.

Indonesia, as a member of the Peacebuilding Commission, seeks to work actively with others in trying to fill the lacunae in the international peacebuilding system. We need to undertake cohesive and integrated peacebuilding strategies, with maximum local ownership, which lead to the resolution of conflicts in their entirety.

We look forward to the full functioning of the newly established Human Rights Council. We firmly believe that the principles agreed upon and contained in the founding resolution (resolution 60/251) should govern every aspect of the Council's work. This is of the utmost importance if the Human Rights Council is to be an effective forum for the promotion and protection of human rights and if it is to benefit the entire membership of the United Nations.

My delegation is hopeful that our recent agreement on the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy will provide an effective operational framework for international cooperation in combating terrorism. We urge Member States to intensify their efforts towards finalizing a comprehensive convention against international terrorism. Our efforts against the scourge of international terrorism need to be comprehensive, taking into account the need to address root causes, and in full compliance with international laws and the principles of respect for human rights.

We also attach great importance to the role of regional organizations in their contribution to many

issues, including development, peacemaking and peacekeeping. We hope that the United Nations will make greater and timely utilization of these valuable resources in its various programmes and strategies.

Globalization has also revealed other realities, including the emergence and the growing importance of civil society's role in the work of the United Nations. While the Organization remains an intergovernmental one where decisions are taken by Member States, it has benefited from its engagement with civil society, both in strengthening the institution and enriching the intergovernmental debate. In the report prepared by the Ambassador of Norway and myself as co-advisers to the President of sixtieth session of the General Assembly, while we acknowledged the need to address the existing "confidence deficit" among Member States and civil society, we stressed that there was sufficient ground to explore better interaction between the two groups and as well as a more meaningful engagement of civil society in the work of the Organization in general and of the General Assembly in particular.

In conclusion, Indonesia reiterates its full support and commitment to all those who endeavour to take concrete steps in promoting multilateralism in line with the principles and objectives of the Charter of the United Nations and international law. There is no greater challenge today than to bring about a democratic and strengthened United Nations for the benefit of all our peoples.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.





General Assembly

Sixty-first session

25th plenary meeting

Monday, 2 October 2006, 3 p.m.
New York

Official Records

President: Ms. Al-Khalifa (Bahrain)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 102 (continued)

Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (A/61/I and Corr.1)

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Secretary-General has rightly pointed out in his report that the indispensable coordinating role of the United Nations in international affairs, as the most representative intergovernmental institution with universal competence, is of ever-greater importance today in this era of globalization.

A record number of peacekeepers — 88,000 — have been sent to numerous conflict zones. Tension continues in the Middle East. The situation in Iraq continues to cause a lack of stability in the region and in the world in general. Kosovo remains an extremely complicated situation in terms of settling the status of that territory. The international community needs to pay greater attention to the hotbeds of conflicts on the African continent. The terrorist threat also continues to worsen.

The Organization needs, therefore, to work to build up its capabilities not only to respond collectively to modern threats and challenges, but also to prevent them. The Russian Federation, currently holding the presidency of the Group of Eight, gives priority attention to this issue.

Acute global threats and challenges call for the consolidation of collective approaches in international affairs and for further improvement of the instruments of multilateral diplomacy. Only the concerted actions of the international community, led by the United Nations, can ensure security in the world within the framework of the emerging multi-polar architecture of international relations. Steps aimed at strengthening the dialogue between civilizations are an important part of such efforts.

Considerable progress has already been made regarding the adaptation of the mechanisms and methods of the work of the United Nations to new conditions, set forth by the 2005 World Summit; however, further work must be carried out. The main theme of the decisions taken to achieve United Nations reform should be to increase the Organization's overall effectiveness and strengthen its pivotal role in international affairs without prejudice to the intergovernmental character of this unique forum. The successful realization of this task is only possible if the Member States agree as completely as possible on all aspects of these transformations.

Genuinely collective efforts are required to meet the growing demand for the unique potential of the United Nations in the field of peacekeeping. Not all of it, as the Secretary-General rightly pointed out, is fully used. The Organization would benefit, for instance, if we made use of the capabilities of the Military Staff Committee and the regional organizations on the basis of the relevant provisions of the Charter.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.



The establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission is expected to help increase the coordination and the effectiveness of international efforts in assisting countries emerging from crises. We think it is important to ensure effective functioning of this intergovernmental body. We intend to actively participate in its work.

The stalling of the international disarmament process does not help to solve the problems in the field of non-proliferation. Collective actions are needed to break the impasse, given the collective nature of our security concerns.

The priority tasks, in our view, are ensuring the activation of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), preventing the deployment of weapons in outer space and achieving a comprehensive agreement on that matter, concluding a treaty banning fissile materials production for military purposes and ensuring international information security. We also need to revitalize multilateral efforts in the area of disarmament and arms control within the Conference on Disarmament and the relevant bodies of the United Nations.

We think it is of primary importance to ensure the rule of law. Full implementation of this principle in international affairs guarantees stability in the world. One of its key components is the fight against impunity. In this area, priority is given to national authorities, which, when necessary, should have the possibility of seeking the help of this Organization. We agree with the Secretary-General that the fight against impunity and efforts to maintain peace should complement each other.

The record of international justice, in our view, has not been entirely successful. The activities of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia have revealed serious shortcomings: political bias in decisions and the significant cost of court proceedings. We have great expectations for the International Criminal Court. We anticipate that this body of justice will make a substantial contribution to the fight against impunity.

Russia views the formation of an effective system of security, with the United Nations holding a central coordinating role, as a key aspect in the fight against international terrorism. The recent adoption of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy provides great potential for reinforcing the systemic work of the

international community in the field of fighting terror. We support the point raised in the report that describes the need to build Member States' counter-terrorist capabilities through the establishment of an effective system of technical assistance. We believe, however, that the major focus here should be the improvement of the quality of the dialogue between States and the Security Council committees established to fight terrorism, as well as on enhancing the capacity of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

We agree that now, after the adoption of the Global Strategy against Terrorism, it is a matter of priority to finish the work on the draft of the comprehensive convention on international terrorism. Intensified efforts are needed to accomplish this as soon as possible.

On the whole, we are satisfied with the analysis of the activities of the Organization in the field of human rights protection. More specifically, we share the opinion that it is necessary to establish and strengthen national systems for the protection and promotion of human rights. Such efforts are needed to facilitate the strengthening of the international regime of human rights protection, which is, in our firm belief, a major long-term priority in this field.

The establishment by the Human Rights Council of two intersessional intergovernmental open-ended working groups on the mechanism of universal periodic reviews and on optimization of the system of special procedures — legacies of the Sub-Commission of the Commission on Human Rights — are undoubtedly positive events. We hope that the working groups will eventually be able to start their work within the proposed format, as envisaged by the relevant resolutions of the first session of the Council, but without limiting themselves to holding informal consultations on the issues within their mandate.

Today, the focus on the issues of development and the strengthening of democracy, as well as the interaction between the United Nations and civil society, based on a broad range of issues on the international agenda, has become more important than ever and deserves special consideration by taking into account the importance and scope of the issues. I would like to highlight the major point, namely, the need to have transparent, unbiased and objective discussions of the entire range of issues, in accordance

with the United Nations Charter and guided by the principles of universality.

On the whole, we share the positive assessments of the Secretary-General of the work done to fulfil the decisions of the Summit aimed at increasing the effectiveness of social and economic activities of the entire United Nations system, and of efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). At the same time, the Organization's potential, in particular, its operational segment, should be used more effectively in order to assist the countries in need. We believe it is impermissible to politicize the work of United Nations operational funds and programmes.

In addition, we note the importance of resolving the problem of overall system coherence and we are looking forward to the report of the high-level panel on that issue. We are willing to have substantive discussions of all realistic proposals.

We note with satisfaction that the issues of sustainable development and the global problems of health care are among the priorities in the report. We share the correct conclusion of the Secretary-General that, since natural disasters have become more frequent, it is necessary to build up the capabilities of the Organization that are aimed at decreasing the threat and enhancing readiness. On our part, we intend to make practical contributions to resolving such acute global problems as climate change, eradication of infectious diseases and a sustainable energy supply. The last two issues are the priorities of the Russian presidency of the Group of Eight.

The report also gives a fairly balanced presentation of humanitarian issues. Justifiable emphasis is given to the establishment of the Central Emergency Response Fund, which is called upon to ensure reliable access to financial resources for preserving lives during the earliest stages of humanitarian response and in planning long-term humanitarian operations.

We deem it necessary for the General Assembly to draft the relevant resolution, with due regard for the views of the Secretary-General favouring a cluster approach to ensure greater coherence in the work of humanitarian operations in the field. The report highlights the difficulties in enhancing humanitarian coordination at the local level, which are related, in our view, to the difficult task of elaborating suitable methods of cooperation with national Governments

that protect the sovereign right of the countries to independently determine the priorities of the humanitarian response and ways to provide it.

We agree with the recommendation favouring, in accordance with existing commitments, the provision of international assistance towards fulfilment of the New Partnership for Africa's Development programme, specifically as regards the reduction of the debt burden and fighting HIV/AIDS.

We attach great significance to improving and enhancing the functional effectiveness and transparency of the administrative, financial and personnel units of the United Nations, as well as to implementing the General Assembly decisions on the reform of the Organization. The most important issues of the ongoing reform are increasing the efficiency of the Secretariat, ensuring greater professionalism and productivity of the staff, clear accountability and responsibility to Member States for the end results.

Mr. McNee (Canada): Let me begin by paying tribute to the Secretary-General for his excellent report on the work of the Organization. He once again has shown us a vision of the future, as well as a road map for getting there. As he ends his remarkable tenure as Secretary-General, it is appropriate that the report also takes stock of our collective accomplishments to date. The report leaves no doubt that the Secretary-General leaves behind an Organization that is stronger and more effective than the one he found ten years ago. We thank him for the persistence, energy and clarity of purpose that he has brought to this task.

More than anything, the report of the Secretary-General validates the truism that reform is not a one-time event, but rather an ongoing process that requires sustained commitment. On the one hand, we have made progress in recent years. The design and establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission, the creation of the new Human Rights Council and the recent adoption of a counter-terrorism strategy are accomplishments in their own right and a testament to our shared determination to tackle contemporary challenges.

On the other hand, much work is still needed to bring to life those innovations in a meaningful way. The Millennium Development Goals are perhaps most illustrative of that point. On the one hand, they have focused the world's attention as never before on a concrete set of objectives for improving the lives of the

world's poorest people. On the other hand, improvements in nutrition, sanitation, education and medical care remain elusive for a full fifth of the world's population, increasing pressure on the development architecture of the United Nations.

That, coupled with the increased demand for United Nations field operations, especially peace support and humanitarian operations, has not only changed the nature of the Organization, but also enlarged managerial risk within it. Above all, those demands underscore the urgency of a reinvigorated and renewed United Nations.

In that regard, Canada welcomes the emphasis of the Secretary-General on the interconnectedness of development, peacekeeping, peacebuilding, human rights and the rule of law, all of which are central to long-term global stability. We further welcome the new focus in this year's report on the role of non-State actors, whose partnership is essential to the success of the United Nations.

As we look at the agenda for the sixty-first session of the General Assembly, it is clear that there will be no shortage of work for Member States and the principal organs of the United Nations. But several challenges stand out as deserving special attention in the months ahead.

First, there is an urgent need to ensure that the new institutions we have created — the Human Rights Council and the Peacebuilding Commission — get off to the right start. In the coming months, a key priority for Canada will be to ensure that the working methods of those bodies are flexible enough to succeed in the task at hand. In particular, it is imperative that the Human Rights Council move beyond the politicized squabbles that hobbled and discredited its predecessor, that the universal periodic review mechanism is implemented effectively and that stronger links are built between the normative and the operational human rights work of the Organization.

Similarly, the Peacebuilding Commission, which will convene its first country-specific meetings in two weeks time, must produce a discernable improvement in the Organization's post-conflict peacebuilding record. Member States must show themselves capable of contributing to the solution, by bringing together the fragmented operational capacity within the Organization and the political authority of the principal organs. Embracing that informal coordination function

is key to ensuring that the countries it engages with do not suffer the fate of Timor-Leste and other post-conflict societies that have resolved conflicts only to relapse into a new round of violence within a few short years.

(spoke in French)

The second critical piece of unfinished business will be to advance Secretariat and management reforms in order to enable the effective pursuit of a shared agenda with real results.

In this regard, one of the most important reform measures to have been put in place during the Secretary-General's term in office is that of results-based budgeting. That system should be expanded. Similarly, stronger, more independent oversight mechanisms and more robust accountability are key priorities for this session. Finally, we look forward to making progress in reforming human resource management with a view to developing the talented, mobile and integrated workforce that the Organization requires.

It has been said that we live in a world of new threats and old institutions. It is clear from the tenth and final report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization that we owe him a debt of gratitude for having transformed this institution so that it can better confront current challenges. As we move forward, the Assembly can rest assured that Canada remains fully committed to continuing the reforms that the Secretary-General has set in motion with a view to achieving our shared vision of a more effective United Nations and a more peaceful, prosperous world.

Mr. Kapoma (Zambia): My delegation joins others in congratulating the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, on his good report contained in document A/61/1. The report provides us with a clear basis for our deliberations. My delegation is pleased that the report gives a broad view of various issues that affect humankind. These issues include development, peace and security, human rights, the rule of law, humanitarian law and the strengthening of the United Nations.

Zambia reaffirms its support for multilateralism as a platform on the basis of which issues of global concern should be resolved. We agree that a new vision of collective security is required through which States Members of the United Nations should address threats

such as war, terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, organized crime, infectious diseases, extreme poverty and environmental degradation.

With regard to the ongoing reform of the United Nations, Zambia believes that it should address the concerns of Member States, especially developing countries. We believe that global partnership for development will facilitate fair participation in the global market by the developing and least developed countries. We call for support from the international community in the areas of trade and investment — areas with regard to which developing countries hope to attain the sustainable targets set out in the Millennium Development Goals. In this regard, we commend the Secretary-General for having launched, in July 2000, the Global Compact. Zambia welcomes that development initiative. We believe that the Global Compact will assist our country in its development efforts in many ways.

The 2005 World Summit Outcome Document (resolution 60/1) reaffirmed our commitment to strengthening the United Nations with a view to enhancing its authority and efficiency, as well as its capacity to address global issues effectively, in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter. World leaders reaffirmed the central position of the General Assembly as the chief deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of our Organization. It is for this reason that we should ensure that measures to strengthen the role of the General Assembly are adopted at this session.

Regarding the Security Council, a body charged with the responsibility for maintaining international peace and security, Zambia reaffirms the need for its reform, in terms of both its enlargement and its working methods. In this regard, Zambia aligns itself with the well-known position taken by the African Union on this matter. Indeed, the Council should be reformed so that it becomes more democratic, transparent and responsive to the challenges of the twenty-first century. In his report "In larger freedom" (A/59/2005), the Secretary-General emphasized that the reform of the United Nations would not be complete without the reform of the Security Council. We agree with him.

The protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms is important in the socio-economic development of any civilization, just as upholding the

tenets of good governance is of cardinal importance for the maintenance of international peace and security. In this regard, Zambia reaffirms its commitment to support the work of the newly established Human Rights Council. As a member of that Council, Zambia commits itself to ensuring that it is effective and efficient.

Other issues of concern to my delegation include extreme poverty and disease. The number of people living with or affected by HIV/AIDS and the number of deaths caused by AIDS have continued to grow globally. Zambia, like many other developing countries adversely affected by HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis, supports efforts by the international community to combat those diseases. We therefore appeal to the international community to honour the commitments made in the context of various forums aimed at increasing and enhancing aid to developing countries. The fight against HIV/AIDS is a global one which must be sustained by the international community at all levels. It is, indeed, a fight which must be won if the future is to be brighter and more assured for coming generations.

In conclusion, Zambia believes that the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals will depend on Member States' political will. We believe that development, security and human rights are important and that they reinforce each other. There is a need, therefore, for the global partnership for development to achieve the agreed Millennium Development Goals. In the Millennium Declaration, world leaders expressed confidence that humanity could make measurable progress towards peace, security, disarmament, human rights, democracy and good governance. Let us therefore rise to the challenge and ensure the fulfilment of those objectives.

Mr. Hannesson (Iceland): The annual report (A/61/1) of the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, on the work of the Organization is an excellent overview of achievements during the past year — and, indeed, of earlier achievements — as well as of the complex challenges facing us. It serves as a clear reminder — for some, it might be a revelation — that the United Nations is not a talking shop. As we debate this report, there are 30,000 civilian staff serving in the field and 65,000 troops and military observers, 7,500 police officers and more than 15,000 international and local civilian personnel serving in 15 peacekeeping operations and three special political or peacebuilding

missions, to mention only one important aspect of United Nations operations, peace and security. The report also helps us to maintain a focus on the main issue: the need for good governance and accountability, both within the Organization and in Member States.

Strengthening the United Nations will continue to be one of the principal tasks at the sixty-first session of the General Assembly. Certainly, real progress was made during the previous session with the establishment of the new Human Rights Council, the Peacebuilding Commission and the Central Emergency Response Fund. However, we have only established the framework; the real work is still ahead of us. Iceland trusts that the new mechanisms, along with the determination of Member States, will contribute to the strengthening of the United Nations.

We concur with the Secretary-General that reform of the United Nations should include reform of the Security Council. As stated on many occasions, Iceland wants comprehensive reform of the Security Council in terms of both expansion and working methods. Both the permanent and non-permanent seats on the Council should increase in number in order to better reflect today's world.

In her statement in the general debate last week (see A/61/PV.20), the Foreign Minister of Iceland emphasized development issues, and in particular sustainable development. The Foreign Minister reaffirmed Iceland's strong commitment to the Doha Development Agenda. Iceland sees the suspension of the global trade talks as a major setback. We welcome and support international efforts to provide debt relief to the poorest countries. We also applaud those countries that have committed themselves to increasing their official development assistance. Over the next three years, Iceland's development assistance will nearly triple, and we are determined to do even more.

Iceland supports what Ambassador Kirsti Lintonen of Finland said earlier today (see A/61/PV.24) about the global response to HIV/AIDS and the urgent need for concerted action in all areas with regard to the development of the African continent. Indeed, the bulk of Iceland's development cooperation is with African countries.

We want to see more determined efforts by development partners and United Nations agencies to pursue gender equality. In that connection, we suggest that the work of the United Nations Development Fund

for Women must be given more weight within the United Nations.

We agree with the Secretary-General that a major challenge for all countries in the years ahead is the development of new and sustainable energy sources. Iceland will continue to contribute to work in that field.

The protection and promotion of fundamental human rights is one of the primary aims of the United Nations. The Secretary-General notes in his report the significantly increased importance of human rights in the work of the Organization. Iceland welcomes that development. The establishment of the Human Rights Council is an example of such progress. In that connection, it is important that the universal periodic review system of the new Human Rights Council be up and running soon. Member States have accepted the fact that we have the responsibility to protect all people from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. Now we have to make sure that we fulfil that responsibility.

The United Nations is the premier international Organization responsible for maintaining peace and security. That is a complex, multidimensional task. The United Nations has begun to put more emphasis on preventing conflict before it develops. Indeed, that is in line with the holistic approach that we have increasingly taken in our work. There can be no security without development and no development without security, as has so often been said in this Hall.

For the past decade — and especially since 11 September 2001 — we have been confronted with terrorism, which now constitutes one of the major threats to international peace and security. While welcoming the new United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (resolution 60/288), adopted by consensus in the General Assembly, Iceland emphasizes that it is important that Member States agree on the next step: a comprehensive convention on international terrorism. We need a concerted effort — including at the highest political levels in capitals — in order to reach agreement on the outstanding issues related to a draft comprehensive convention.

Reining in the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and reinvigorating disarmament initiatives are also essential to long-term peace and security. Sadly, the 2005 World Summit, the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of

Nuclear Weapons and the Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects yielded no results in that regard. The Secretary-General is right to point out the danger of terrorism linked to weapons of mass destruction. Iceland supports his call for more concerted action on small arms, which cause intolerable destruction among large sections of the world's population.

Madam President, your predecessor, Mr. Jan Eliasson, repeatedly reminded us that the United Nations and multilateralism are indispensable in our world today, where threats are often global in scale. All of us need to be reminded of that. Indeed, we agree with what Ambassador Munir Akram of Pakistan said on the subject earlier in this debate, at the 24th plenary meeting. The United Nations will continue to need visionary, courageous and skilful leadership.

During his 10 years at the helm of the Secretariat, the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, has played a leading role in "bringing new life to the Organization", to quote the Norwegian Nobel Committee. As this is Mr. Annan's last report on the work of the United Nations, I take this opportunity to thank the Secretary-General for his leadership and for working tirelessly — to quote the Nobel Committee once again — "for a better organized and more peaceful world".

Mr. Kazykhanov (Kazakhstan): First of all, I would like to congratulate you, Madam President, on your election to your high office and to express confidence that under your skilful stewardship, the sixty-first session of the General Assembly will be successful and fruitful.

I also take this opportunity to pay tribute to the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, for his comprehensive report (A/61/1), which not only describes achievements and problems encountered in the areas of development, security and human rights, but also elaborates on new trends in the global interrelationship, such as interactions with civil society and the business community.

Kazakhstan supports a multipronged strategy aimed at preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Real progress in that area is possible if all Member States fulfil their obligations regarding nuclear disarmament and the vertical and horizontal

non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Kazakhstan is convinced that the international community, particularly the nuclear-weapon States, should encourage in every possible way the establishment of internationally recognized nuclear-weapon-free zones in various parts of the world. The establishment of such zones promotes international peace and security.

We have no doubt that the signing, in Semipalatinsk in September 2006, of the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia is a crucial breakthrough in the efforts to ensure regional and global stability and security. The Central Asian States are ready to continue consultations with the permanent members of the Security Council on the issue of that Treaty's entry into force.

Kazakhstan firmly supports peacekeeping activities and international efforts to enhance the United Nations peacekeeping capacity.

We commend the establishment of a newly elected body within the United Nations system — the Peacebuilding Commission — that was set up thanks to the intensive efforts of all delegations, which were able to reach a compromise through negotiations.

Convinced that combating terrorism is a top priority, Kazakhstan commends the launch of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. We view the five pillars of the concept of counter-terrorism action as integral elements of the efforts to avert the threat of terrorism. Kazakhstan believes that international cooperation to fight terrorism should be developed in full conformity with the provisions of the United Nations Charter and the norms of international law.

With illegal routes of delivery of Afghan drugs from Asia to Europe running through its territory, Kazakhstan makes every effort to address that threat. The fight can be effective only if we join our efforts and mobilize the resources of the United Nations and its specialized agencies. It is precisely for that reason that Kazakhstan has supported the United Nations initiative to set up in Kazakhstan a Central Asian regional information and coordination centre to fight illegal drug trafficking.

We would like to express gratitude to the Asian countries for supporting the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia, which undoubtedly strengthens stability and confidence-

building measures in Asia and will create favourable conditions for interaction in the interests of the prosperity and sustainable development of our countries.

Development issues should continue to be among the priority items of the agenda of the principal bodies of the United Nations. The implementation of the 2005 World Summit Outcome will remain an important priority for the Organization in the coming period. Kazakhstan is committed to its undertakings regarding the Millennium Development Goals and works continuously to implement its own long-term strategies — “Kazakhstan 2030” — and an innovative industrial economic development programme. The Government’s main objective in the area of economic policies is to ensure that Kazakhstan joins the ranks of the most competitive economies.

Regional integration is an adequate way to meet the challenges of the modern world. Kazakhstan attaches great importance to cooperation with States on a broad range of issues within the framework of the Commonwealth of Independent States, the Eurasian Economic Community, the Organization of Economic Cooperation and other regional economic organizations. In April 2007, Kazakhstan will host the sixty-third session of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific.

As the world’s largest landlocked country, Kazakhstan urges the international community, and above all the developed countries, to make every effort to meet the needs of the least developed and developing landlocked countries. Kazakhstan stands for the global partnership for development through the establishment of an open, rule-based, predictable and non-discriminatory trade and financial system.

Kazakhstan trusts that the United Nations will continue to play a leading role in coordinating relief operations and believes that the establishment of the Central Emergency Response Fund will allow the Organization to launch relief operations in the early days of crises and ensure more adequate distribution of relief. Kazakhstan was among the first countries to make a voluntary contribution to the Fund.

Kazakhstan views the establishment of the United Nations Human Rights Council as an important step in the process of reforming the Organization and the efforts to enhance its action to protect human rights. In our view, that body should focus on the most burning

human rights issues on the basis of an unbiased and objective analysis of situations throughout the world and the provision of effective recommendations.

We pay close attention to the promotion of democracy, the building of civil society and the enhancement of inter-ethnic and inter-faith accord in the country.

We express our appreciation to all States that have supported Kazakhstan’s candidature for the presidency of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe in 2009. The Government of Kazakhstan’s policy to maintain and promote a climate of tolerance and accord in society constitutes an integral part of our international efforts to foster the culture of peace and dialogue among civilizations.

It is no accident that Kazakhstan has hosted a forum of leaders of world and traditional religions. The second congress has just completed its deliberations in Astana. Religious leaders adopted a declaration calling for an active dialogue among religions. We cannot allow the use of religious differences as an instrument of hatred and strife, and we have to save humanity from a global clash of religions and cultures. The congress has become Kazakhstan’s contribution to global dialogue among religions.

As stated in the report under consideration, “if history judges 2005 for its promises, then 2006 must be judged on implementation” (A/61/I, para. 27). We strongly believe that this year and upcoming years must be an era of implementation of goals we have already set up.

Mr. Le Luong Minh (Viet Nam): At the outset, on behalf of the Vietnamese delegation, I would like to express our sincere gratitude to Secretary-General Kofi Annan for his annual report on the work of the Organization. We take note with satisfaction that the report highlights the goals of development and achieving peace and security as the first priorities on the agenda of the Organization. We welcome the incorporation of the report on the progress made in implementing the Millennium Declaration into the Secretary-General’s report.

We are pleased to note that cooperation for development has enjoyed a higher priority on the agenda of the United Nations and that achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) has been placed at the core of the United Nations global

activities. That corresponds to the priority attached to the achievement of the MDGs by Governments and peoples around the world, as mentioned in the report. While noting, on the one hand, the achievements recorded — such as the drop in the world's proportion of people living in extreme poverty; the reduction in the child mortality rates in developing countries; the increase in the number of people having access to improved sanitation; the increase in the primary enrolment ratios in developing regions of the world; and the level of commitment of not only the Governments, but also the general, public and the political momentum resulting therefrom — we share the concern of the Secretary-General that progress has been uneven and that the ongoing levels of human deprivation remain staggering. The statistics he has offered in many areas are in fact daunting.

One year has elapsed since our leaders adopted the Outcome Document of the 2005 World Summit, in which important commitments were made in order to enable developing countries to achieve the internationally agreed development goals and objectives, including the Millennium Development Goals. The commitments are many and concrete, ranging from embedding the global goals into country-level processes to new targets in most important areas of activity. The Secretary-General has called 2005 a year of commitments.

We welcome the fact that to help implement these commitments a number of positive steps have been undertaken, including the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative and the timetables set by many countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) to meet the official development assistance (ODA) target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product income by 2015. Looking back at the implementation of those commitments over the past year, however, we share the view that, in spite of some advances, progress is modest and too incomplete. The increase in the level of ODA is far from enough to support real ground-level investment in the neediest countries; the suspension of the Doha development round caused further disappointment.

Developing countries continue to suffer from hardships caused by the pressure of globalization and strengthened protectionism in a number of developed countries. A global partnership for development is yet to be seen. Partnership for development has been chosen as the theme of the sixty-first session of the

General Assembly. It is the view of my delegation that at this session we have to focus on mobilizing further political will to undertake concrete action to implement our commitments. Our delegation looks forward to contributing to this process.

The past year saw both bright and dark spots in the world's overall peace and security picture. They included the conclusion of the peacekeeping operation in Sierra Leone and its transformation to a peacebuilding mission, and the regression towards violence in Timor-Leste just one year after the United Nations pulled its last soldiers out of that country in May 2005. Prolonged armed conflicts and civil wars continued to threaten the lives of millions of people and pushed many others into miserable conditions. The recent conflict in Lebanon added another dark spot to the picture. The performance, progress and shortcomings of the Organization in bringing peace and security to the countries concerned have been analysed in the report.

Let me reaffirm our view that conflict and tension can be resolved only through dialogue and negotiation on the basis of mutual trust and understanding, not through unilateral actions. The crucial role of the United Nations in the maintenance of peace and security must be reaffirmed and further enhanced.

Terrorism continues to pose a dangerous threat to peace and security. We reaffirm our strong condemnation of acts of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. We support the Secretary-General's call for the international community to continue to work together to confront and defeat terrorism. In our opinion, the fight against terrorism can be won only through comprehensive and balanced measures conducted in full conformity with the principles of the United Nations Charter and international law. Furthermore, this fight should avoid any application of selectivity and double standards, and the root causes of terrorism need to be fully addressed.

Taking note of the adoption of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (resolution 60/288), we look forward to working with other delegations with a view to the early conclusion of a comprehensive convention on international terrorism.

It has been the shared conviction of Member States that the United Nations should be reformed in order to improve its effectiveness, democratization and modes of operation on the basis of the fundamental

principles enshrined in the Charter. While welcoming initial successes in the United Nations reform process, such as the establishment of the Human Rights Council and the Peacebuilding Commission, we realize that much remains to be done. Measures are needed to consolidate the central role and power of the General Assembly. The Economic and Social Council must be reformed to be able to better support the economic and social development activities of Member States. We regret the delay in this connection and pledge to work with other delegations towards an early solution.

The Security Council should be reformed in terms of both its composition and its methods of work in order to ensure that it really represents the concerns and interests of all United Nations Member States, as stipulated in the Charter. In this connection, I would like again to state our view that Council membership should be expanded in both categories and that developing countries should be more adequately represented on the Council.

Mr. Mbuende (Namibia): I would like to congratulate the Secretary-General on the presentation of an excellent report on the work of the Organization (A/61/1). I am particularly intrigued by the manner in which the report is presented. The first thing that attracted my attention was the integration of the report on progress made in the implementation of the Millennium Declaration into the report on the work of the Organization instead of its being the subject of a separate report, as was the case in the past.

This development not only augurs well for greater synergy and coherence in the activities of the Organization; more important, it places the development agenda at centre stage in the work of the Organization. That is to say, the objective of attaining the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) is not an appendix, but rather a matter on which the performance of our Organization, and of us as individual Members, can be judged.

The Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2) set ambitious goals, but they can certainly be attained, given the natural, human and financial resources at our disposal globally. The world has enough resources to make poverty a thing of the past. The prevalence of poverty is not a result of lack of resources, but rather of how they have been deployed. They have not been deployed in the service of humanity as a whole. The question we have to answer is whether we have taken

the first steps to correct that situation. We call on all Member States to translate their commitments under the Millennium Declaration into action.

We welcome the inclusion in the report of what the Secretary-General calls "global constituencies". The recognition that the United Nations has to learn to work with business and civil society is important. Development is a collective responsibility. Non-State actors have experience and resources that can be harnessed and mainstreamed into the global development agenda. They are equally important players in peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts. An effective mechanism for cooperation has thus to be put in place. The alignment of corporate activities with the broader United Nations goals, programmes and projects promises to bring greater benefits to all in many areas. In this regard, we call for the strengthening of the Global Compact Office.

Notwithstanding the good efforts of the United Nations and individual countries in the areas of preventive diplomacy and peacekeeping, peace remains an elusive goal in many parts of the world. The situation in the Middle East is of grave concern. It has shown the ugly face of human destructiveness. We hope that peace will prevail over war so that the people of that region can live in good-neighbourliness, peace and harmony.

The situations in a number of African countries where there are United Nations peacekeeping missions, such as the Sudan, Ethiopia and Eritrea and Côte d'Ivoire, to mention but a few, warrant our collective urgent attention in order to ensure that those operations are crowned with success. Africa is the continent that, because of its level of development, can least afford internal strife. There cannot be development without peace and security. War causes and exacerbates poverty. The people of Africa are already suffering from poverty induced by the legacy of colonialism, unjust international economic relations, corruption, bad governance, environmental degradation and other natural calamities. Certainly, the continent does not need war on top of all that. We need peace now.

Namibia will leave no stone unturned in the quest for peace. It is against this background that we have contributed troops, military observers and police officers to various United Nations missions in Burundi, Haiti, Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia and Eritrea, the

Sudan and Kosovo, among others. Let us give peace a chance. Namibia is able and willing to make its contribution to peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding.

We are gravely concerned with the lack of progress in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation. Nuclear weapons pose an especially terrible threat. In Namibia's view, this terrible threat can cease only when all States adhere to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and when its article VI is fully implemented. We would like to see a transparent multilateral process leading to the total denuclearization of the world. Only if nuclear weapons are completely eliminated will our world be safe from them, including from the chance that they fall into the hands of non-State actors. At the same time, Namibia would like to reassert the right of all countries to use nuclear power for peaceful purposes. In this regard, it is important for industrialized countries to share their knowledge, technical know-how and experience with developing countries.

We are happy to note that 164 countries have ratified the Kyoto Protocol and we urge those that have not done so to ratify that Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Environmental degradation and the prospects of climate change pose a serious threat to humanity. Among other things, it has the potential to further entrench injustices and exacerbate poverty. Given the knowledge divide, rich countries have greater capacity to deal with the consequences of an environmental disaster than poor countries.

The United Nations is the hope of the poor nations. It is therefore important to speed up the work on the reform of the Organization through a review of mandates and the reform of the Security Council. We hope that reform of the Security Council, apart from broadening participation, representation and transparency, among other things, will result in speedy decision-making and increased resource allocation for conflicts resolutions in Africa in particular.

Equally important is the reform and strengthening of the Economic and Social Council to play a central role of promoting policy dialogue, development cooperation, post-conflict reconstruction and coordination. We regret the delay in the adoption of a resolution on reform of the Economic and Social Council that provides for follow-up, monitoring, and

ensuring accountability of Member States in fulfilling their commitments to the partnership for development.

Mr. Ehouzou (Benin) (*spoke in French*): Madam President, my delegation is grateful to you for having organized this debate on the report on the work of the Organization (A/61/1 and Corr.1), which the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, introduced on 19 September, at the 10th plenary meeting, in a very moving speech which continues to resonate in this Hall.

My delegation is pleased with the exhaustive assessment of the 10 years that he has spent in his important office. The facts are presented with extreme meticulousness. We are pleased to note the remarkable progress that has been achieved and at the same time are deeply concerned about the constraints encountered by the Organization in tackling the major challenges which humankind had to face during this period. There is no doubt that the United Nations has contributed significantly to changing the face of the world. It has also greatly changed itself in the course of this period, as reflected in the bodies created within the framework of the reform and new structures that have enriched the Secretariat so that it can rise to the level of its mission.

My country shares the pride of the Secretary-General, who unreservedly dedicated himself to a mission with unlimited demands. Benin was also a stakeholder in the construction and orchestration of multilateral cooperation which has been the spirit of the major projects carried out by the Organization. They have undeniably shaped the world at the intersection of the national interests of Member States and the ideals enshrined in the Charter. My country pays tribute to the Secretary-General, who, on the situations he has managed, has constantly striven to obtain the best possible outcomes, given the constraints and opportunities linked to the circumstances of the moment.

One of the most striking achievements of this period was the consensus formulation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which made it possible to refocus the action of the Organization on the crucial issue of promoting development. The unequivocal commitment of the United Nations to eradicate poverty is an undeniable achievement that the Secretary-General rightly considers to be unprecedented in human history.

My country, as Chair of the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) Global Coordination Bureau,

welcomes the Secretary-General's invaluable contribution to refocusing the United Nations agenda. It is true that the United Nations resolutely took the lead when it came to the follow-up of the implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010, as we saw clearly in the High-level Meeting held in New York on 18 and 19 September 2006 for a comprehensive review of the implementation of the Programme of Action (see A/61/PV.7-9).

In addition to the High-level Meeting, the very significant exchanges which took place during the course of the general debate at the sixty-first session, on the theme of promoting a global partnership for achieving the Development Goals, make it possible to consider prospects in that area in a more positive light.

Such a partnership means a clear identification of the commitments of stakeholders and a declared willingness to assume them in good faith. In this regard, the report of the Secretary-General takes stock of the situation, enabling Member States to know where we stand and what remains to be done, as well as the role that the United Nations can play for concerted and coordinated action in this area.

The report of the Secretary-General stresses the mobilization of adequate resources and the need to resume multilateral trade negotiations within the framework of the Doha round in order to establish an equitable trade regime between wealthy countries and developing countries, and on the protection of the environment. This provides us with very specific terms of reference for the action to be taken to achieve the goals we have set, which we must pursue today, given our improved understanding of the interdependence of Member States and its implications.

That approach, highlighted in the Secretary-General's report, inevitably places Africa at the centre of the major United Nations priorities. It must remain so for the next decade. We even dare to hope that the international community will continue to shoulder its substantial responsibility for meeting Africa's specific needs by more resolutely and consistently helping to combat the ills impeding its progress, whether in promoting governance, controlling pandemics or mobilizing resources to develop its productive capacities.

The maintenance of peace and security is a central area of action for the United Nations; it is also the area in which the Organization has been most called upon to work over the past 10 years. We have reason to welcome the great readiness shown by the international community to deploy human and financial resources to deal with armed conflicts and to monitor the considerable progress made by countries emerging from conflict, particularly in the area of peacebuilding.

We agree with the Secretary-General that much remains to be done with regard to measures to prevent the eruption of further armed conflicts. Today, when we are seeing the limits of the exponential growth of peacekeeping operations, the United Nations must be able to show greater effectiveness in the area of conflict prevention. Here, the recommendations made by the Secretary-General in his progress report on the prevention of armed conflict (A/60/891) are convincingly justified.

The Secretary-General's analysis of developments over the past 10 years with respect to the crucial issues of disarmament and non-proliferation challenges the Member States that are responsible for the stalemate in that area since 2000. Indeed, it is regrettable that no major initiative has been taken to eliminate the risk of nuclear conflagration, which continues to threaten humanity because of the high alert level of the forces of nuclear-weapon States and because they maintain considerable stocks of nuclear weapons.

The Secretary-General rightly recalls the need to avert the terrifying instability that would result from the proliferation of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, and particularly from their acquisition by non-State actors. In that regard, we cannot forget that Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) was adopted as a conservative measure to deal with a legal vacuum that must be filled by negotiating an international convention on preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction to non-State actors.

With regard to small arms and light weapons, we are pleased that the Secretary-General echoed the concerns of countries that are victims of the harmful consequences of their uncontrolled spread, due to an illicit trade that persists despite the efforts to combat it. At the present session, it is important for the General Assembly to agree on measures to strengthen those

efforts in the light of the discussions that took place at the Review Conference held in June and July 2006.

Promoting the rule of law and human rights is essential to preserve human dignity, maintain peace and promote development. We welcome the Secretary-General's unfailing commitment to this cause and the very commendable results that have characterized United Nations action in that regard during the 10 years of his two terms of office. My country is a concrete example of the international community's achievements in this area, as can be seen by the peaceful transfer of power that took place there in March 2006. On behalf of the Government of Benin, I take this opportunity to express once again, from this rostrum, the deep gratitude of the Beninese people for the financial assistance that enabled them to hold timely elections and to peacefully, appropriately and — I might add — very elegantly manage the situations related to those elections.

Young democracies must continue to benefit from effective United Nations support for their consolidation. They must be able to continue to enjoy such support as needed in the coming years. To that end, it is essential that, *inter alia*, the resources of the United Nations Democracy Fund be swiftly restored so that the Fund can meet the high demand for assistance shown in its first call for project proposals, made in April 2006.

In addition, we commend the activities of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and fully support the implementation of its strategic plan, which would make it possible to significantly enhance its capacity to assist in improving the human rights situation on the ground throughout the world.

In another area, the considerable efforts undertaken to help stricken populations and victims of natural disasters are commendable, as are the measures taken to ensure that such assistance can be provided more swiftly. Here, we join in the Secretary-General's appeal for easier access by humanitarian personnel to victims and for ensuring victims' rights.

Finally, we once again pay tribute to the Secretary-General for having shared with Member States the urgency of the reforms adopted at the 2005 Summit and for having supported, with his proven expertise, the implementation of the agreed measures. We call on Member States to continue the consultations

so as to move reform forward in the areas where it is stalled so that we can make the United Nations ever more able to fulfil its role in the survival of humanity and in the quest for suitable solutions to the problems and challenges facing us.

My country commends the great work accomplished by the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan, at the head of the United Nations. We hope that his successor will continue without interruption the projects that have begun for the greater good of the peoples of the United Nations, who continue to place their hopes in the Organization in their quest to achieve well-being and security and to preserve human dignity in the face of known and unknown threats and challenges.

Mr. Bodini (San Marino): We would like to thank the Secretary-General not only for his report on the work of the Organization (A/61/1 and Corr.1), but also, and more important, for the outstanding job that he has done over the past 10 years. During his tenure, the United Nations has had to respond to unpredictable changes and threatening challenges, including an explosion of pandemics worldwide, devastating natural disasters, terrorist attacks around the world, massive starvation among the poorest and international strife at a level never before seen — all documented relentlessly and in real time by the global media.

The United Nations employs 90,000 people and has a yearly budget of \$10 billion, and thus is comparable in scale to many international conglomerates. It is commendable that so much has been done with so little, but it is obvious that much more has to be done if we are to be able to deal with the daily challenges of our world. Greater human and financial resources must be deployed to deal with environmental crises and to fund peacekeeping operations, human rights protection efforts, the monitoring of the peaceful use of atomic energy and other initiatives, including those aimed at providing, in a fair and balanced manner, for economic growth for the unprivileged and poor.

We at the United Nations have to do more planning so that we can be prepared to meet the social and economic needs of the world's growing population. We must also act decisively on all of the resolutions approved so far and monitor their implementation.

Under your leadership, Madam, we must remake the General Assembly, according to the Charter, into

the centrepiece of the United Nations structure — a pragmatic and open forum, where problems can be examined and solved in a timely manner in response to the many crises. Moreover, I am sure that all 192 Member States in this Hall agree that the Security Council will be reformed in the near future. San Marino shares the wish of many among us to start anew with fresh, open and transparent negotiations. It is my belief, Madam, that under your leadership this goal will be achieved.

Mr. Maurer (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): We would like to thank the Secretary-General for his report on the work of the Organization (A/61/1 and Corr.1), which places the activities of the United Nations in the context of the challenges that it has had to face following the many major changes that have characterized the international environment over the past 10 years. The report thus provides us with a welcome opportunity to turn our attention for a moment away from current events and to comment on at least some of the milestones that have been reached by the United Nations in its current endeavours.

Much has been said today and over the past few weeks, and I am not going to reiterate our positions on issues of peace, development, human rights or the environment. I will limit my comments to just three areas.

My first comment concerns the structure of the report itself, which reflects the three main areas of focus of United Nations activities: development, which we always understand as sustainable development — meaning that it also needs to take into account the environmental dimension; peace and security; and human rights and democracy.

In our view, the explicit recognition of the interdependence of those areas was a very important conceptual development of the World Summit. The potential consequences of this insight in terms of the way in which we formulate and implement policies are considerable, but a great deal remains to be done in order to systematically translate this new approach into our policies. The ability to work in those three areas, and to do so at both the political and operational levels, is one of the most valuable characteristics of the United Nations.

Secondly, I would like to highlight the Secretary-General's important ideas about the changing role of the State — ideas that underlie many of the paragraphs

of the report and even appear to be a common thread running through much of it. We agree with the Secretary-General's assertion that the State has neither withered away nor become redundant — quite the contrary. As societies become ever more complex, as globalization weaves an intricate fabric of relations between individuals and groups, regardless of borders, as significant daily activities in the economic, cultural, religious and social spheres are liberated from direct State control, the role of the State is changing fundamentally. Under such circumstances, the State can no longer act as an administrator; its role is to guarantee rights, and it must be at the service of individuals and communities, acting as a forum, a regulator, an arbitrator or a mediator.

The change in the perception of the State's role is not limited to internal policy, but also has a considerable impact in terms of international relations, as is clearly underscored by the notion of the responsibility to protect, which was affirmed by heads of State or Government at the World Summit.

Another direct consequence of this development for the United Nations concerns the extent and nature of its collaboration with civil society and the business world. The importance of this collaboration is duly reflected in the structure of the report, which devotes an entire chapter to these major global partners. We hope that the United Nations will be able to build on the initiatives and positive experiences of recent years, and thus be able to intensify various forms of collaboration with these essential players in an atmosphere of respect for differences and in accordance with clearly defined rules.

My third comment more directly concerns the United Nations. The Organization is today confronted with many challenges that reflect the growing need for close international cooperation based on law and carried out within the framework of multilateral institutions. Important reform efforts are under way in that context — reforms that must make it possible for the United Nations to face the challenges of the twenty-first century.

I would like to refer to just one of those current reform efforts — the one that is both the most visible to the general public and of great symbolic importance, namely, the reform of the Security Council. The nature of contemporary challenges — as the Secretary-General's report confirms — is such that a formula

involving a limited number of States can longer properly respond to today's geopolitical realities. In view of this, Switzerland feels that the expansion of the Security Council should be accompanied by reform of its working methods so as to make it more representative and transparent and to bolster the authority of its decisions.

I cannot conclude my statement on the final report of the current Secretary-General on the work of the Organization without reiterating my country's sincerest thanks to the Secretary-General himself. Over the past 10 years, he has succeeded in clearly identifying the challenges faced by the United Nations as a result of the many and sudden upheavals in the international arena. He has demonstrated wisdom and tenacity in providing Member States with perceptive analyses of such developments, together with proposals for action and reform, which have had an important impact on the political debate and have borne fruit. The current report serves as a final notable example. We warmly congratulate the Secretary-General.

Mr. Abdalrhaleem (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): We would like to thank the Secretary-General for his important report on the work of the Organization. It bodes well that the General Assembly is following up the general debate with a discussion of the report on the work of the United Nations — an Organization in which our peoples have placed a great many expectations — including its successes and failures. Although many decades have passed since the United Nations was founded, the Organization is often unable to respond to the aspirations of the founding fathers. This is clearly the case as far as the Security Council is concerned; indeed, it applies specifically to the Security Council, which, given its current undemocratic composition, is actually an obstacle to the achievement of democratic international relations.

The United Nations cannot call for democracy in others when it is unable to achieve real democracy for itself. Through its influential members, the Security Council is often a part of the problem, rather than the solution. If the Organization is to play a new role, it, and the Security Council in particular, must be reformed. If it is not, the Organization will find itself caught up in a vicious circle formed of private agendas and double standards.

We are following with interest the current session of the Human Rights Council in Geneva, and hope that

the new Council will not suffer the fate of the former Commission. We hope that the Peacebuilding Commission will perform its tasks without infringing upon the mandates of other United Nations organs.

The Secretary-General's report focuses on United Nations cooperation with regional organizations. We hope that the Organization will put its weight behind support for regional organizations, saving money and effort in the process, and allowing them to solve their regional problems by themselves. In that regard, we pay tribute to the excellent role being played by the African Union with respect to the problem of Darfur, and hope that the international community will respect its commitments in supporting the African Union logistically and materially so that it can complete its mandate, implement the Abuja Agreement and promote the progress of peace and stability in my country, launched under the peace agreement for the southern Sudan.

In paying tribute to and expressing appreciation for the role of the African Union, we warn against the hidden agendas of some great Powers to exploit the issue of Darfur as a tool of influence over the Sudan's resources and national decisions. In that regard, if the United Nations is to be effective in this new globalized world, it should shun the private agendas of some of its influential Members that use international forums to serve their own interests. Such behaviour poses a threat to international peace and security.

We appreciate the report's important reference to the special needs of Africa and to support for Africa's development, which must be a priority for the United Nations. The Organization's efforts should also be linked to the New Partnership for Africa's Development, which calls for enhanced resources to be directed to Africa, solutions to the debt problem, and special attention to the needs of the least developed countries. We hope that those efforts will also be linked effectively to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

My country attaches special importance to the Millennium Declaration and the MDGs. We hope that the Economic and Social Council will play an important role in the follow-up to the commitments made under the MDGs. We must establish indicators for the achievement of the Goals, including analysis of the obstacles to their implementation, so that the developing countries will not be caught up in another

vicious circle of squandering more time and resources. The MDGs should not be relegated to the dustbin of history, as has happened for decades now to the calls for a new international economic order.

The Secretary-General's report, although comprehensive, does not refer to international cooperation in science and technology. We hope that the report submitted to the General Assembly next year will invoke the role of the United Nations in enhancing international cooperation in science and technology among its Members, which is a very important element in promoting sustainable social and economic development for our peoples.

As the United Nations selects its new Secretary-General, we hope that the ultimate choice for that important international post will promote the effectiveness and dynamism of the work and activities of the Organization, as well as its professionalism, neutrality and impartiality. That will strengthen the Organization's cooperation at this very important moment in international relations.

Mr. Zewdie (Ethiopia): My delegation expresses its appreciation to the Secretary-General for his comprehensive and last report on the work of the Organization during his final year in office. My delegation welcomes especially his emphasis on the work of the Organization in implementing the Millennium Declaration. My delegation will briefly comment on both the development and the peace and security issues highlighted in the report.

It is encouraging to note that progress has been made in implementing internationally agreed development goals. It is to be recalled that, prior to the Millennium Development Goals, the Monterrey Consensus and the World Summit on Sustainable Development underlined the need for the allocation of 0.7 per cent of the gross national income of the developed countries to official development assistance (ODA) so that developing countries would be able to achieve internationally agreed development goals. In that regard, it is a positive development that aggregate ODA has increased to \$106 billion. As a result, extreme poverty is dropping, while improvements have been shown in child health, sanitation, access to safe water and primary education.

That being the generally positive picture, the challenge remains, however, that the progress is uneven. In sub-Saharan Africa, for example, the

number of people living under the poverty line has not shown any substantial change. As the report on the world social situation in 2005 and the world economic and social survey in 2006 have revealed, the region remains behind others in achieving the Millennium Development Goals. We therefore agree with the Secretary-General's statement that providing support for Africa is a priority issue for the United Nations.

My country, for its part, is striving to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. We have committed the lion's share of the meagre resources at our disposal to the development of infrastructure, improving the social sector and capacity-building, which are needed for our development efforts to succeed. In the last three years, our economy has registered an average growth rate of 9.5 per cent. For the same period, exports grew by 28.5 per cent on average. Primary school enrolment increased from 30 per cent in the early 1990s to 89 per cent at present. In order to improve our capacity for development, 13 additional universities are being built. Based on those encouraging results, a second five-year development programme, known as "Programme for Accelerated and Sustained Development to End Poverty", has been developed and is under implementation. Alleviating poverty by meeting the Millennium Development Goals remains the cornerstone of our development programme.

It is in this regard that we fully subscribe to the recommendations of the Secretary-General, namely incorporating new targets in the MDGs — to achieve universal access to reproductive health by 2015, to provide access by all that require it to HIV treatment by 2010, and to reduce the rate of biodiversity loss by 2010.

With regard to peace and security, the report indicates that the annual budget of the Organization allocated to peacekeeping and other field operations has increased substantially. It also states that half of the world's conflicts and peacekeeping operations are in Africa. While it is encouraging that the Organization is paying due attention to resolving conflicts in Africa, it is also an indication that the challenge to bring about peace on the continent is a tremendous one. Africa, more than ever before, needs more resources for its own socio-economic development to improve the living standards of its peoples. It is therefore disappointing that conflict resolution absorbs the lion's share of the resources of the United Nations.

It is for that reason that my country has been striving for peace and security in its region for many years now. As is well known, Ethiopia is among the troop-contributing countries in peacekeeping operations in our region. We are currently participating in Liberia and have successfully completed the Mission in Burundi. We have also dispatched our observers to Côte d'Ivoire. We believe that by working in close cooperation with other member countries that the peacekeeping and mediation capacities of the African Union could be strengthened and ensured. That is why the Secretary-General stressed in his report the need to have the support of the international community to strengthen national and regional efforts aimed at resolving conflicts and creating conditions for peace.

Finally, let me reiterate once again that Ethiopia, as it has been doing thus far, will continue to actively participate in the activities of the United Nations, with a view to making our world a safer and more peaceful place.

The President: I now call on the observer of the Observer State of the Holy See.

Archbishop Migliore (Holy See): As we consider the Secretary-General's report on the work of the Organization, my delegation would like to thank him and his staff for their work in the field and on this comprehensive report.

As has often been said, reform is not an event but a process, and this year marks an important occasion aimed at ensuring that these processes continue. To that end, we welcome the Secretary-General's efforts in continuing to press for reform. The creation of a mediation support capacity within the Department of Political Affairs is an example of how existing structures can be successfully modified to address global needs. However, despite the progress made, much work remains to be done in many different areas.

We share the Secretary-General's views on the importance of conflict prevention and the responsibility to protect. At the same time, we would like to stress the need to interconnect more explicitly and more effectively the areas of security and development. The present lack of progress in the fields of development aid and trade reform threatens everyone's security and well-being. By contrast, the fulfilment of the Millennium Development (MDGs) promises economic progress, the alleviation of poverty, a reduction in terrorism and increased social harmony.

At recent conferences and meetings on disarmament, my delegation expressed its deep concern at the stagnation of the multilateral negotiations on disarmament and non-proliferation. The United Nations system as a whole should grasp this opportunity to acknowledge the links between disarmament, development and humanitarian concerns, and commit itself to strategies and programmes to reduce the demand for arms and armed violence.

In the area of humanitarian assistance, the establishment of the Central Emergency Response Fund and the innovative cluster coordination system are important modifications to the existing humanitarian assistance system. My delegation looks forward to closely following their development. In coordinating humanitarian relief, the United Nations should continue to play a leading role in balancing the autonomy of civil society actors with the need to provide effective aid to the most vulnerable.

My delegation agrees with the observation made in the report that a great deal of progress has been achieved in the field of HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment and care. Nevertheless, while the pandemic seems to be under control in certain countries, many other countries appear to be almost helpless in tackling the spread of HIV/AIDS. We would do well to face this issue with more focused initiatives, learning, for example, from the specific actions taken in the field of foreign debt with the highly indebted poorest countries. A concentration of our financial, logistical and human resources would enable the countries most affected by HIV/AIDS to put an end to that scourge and consolidate the hope that humankind will overcome the pandemic worldwide.

While greater efforts are needed to ensure that all the commitments of 2005 are fulfilled, it is important to understand the breadth of the commitments that were made. The World Summit Outcome Document was a carefully negotiated and well-crafted document that sought to balance strongly held views. It is therefore of the utmost importance that in implementing this document we ensure that respect for that delicate balance is maintained. To that end, it is important to reaffirm that ensuring access to reproductive health by 2015, as referenced in paragraph 24, was seen by our leaders as a means of achieving the target of reducing maternal mortality rather than as a target in and of itself.

Finally, it is our sincere hope that this session of the General Assembly will continue to move from commitments to action and that the United Nations can continue the process of transforming itself into an institution that is ready for the challenges of the twenty-first century.

The President: In accordance with General Assembly resolution 54/195 of 17 December 1999, I now call on the observer for the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources.

Mr. Baghawat-Singh (International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources): The report on the work of the Organization is always a comprehensive document containing an overview of United Nations activities and programmes. The International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) will comment on issues related to the environment and conservation.

The General Assembly expressed concern about the slow and uneven progress towards poverty eradication and reaffirmed the international commitment to more effectively advance the fundamental objectives of economic development with a focus on implementing a global partnership for development. However, this commitment was not effectively conveyed by most States with very few references made to environmental concerns during the first two weeks of the general debate.

The International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) welcomes all development commitments, but emphasizes the lack of current environmental commitments and the lack of urgency within such commitments. This has allowed already slow progress to be further hampered by such factors as the increased frequency and magnitude of natural disasters and conflicts. The IUCN therefore calls for even greater and a more urgent commitment from the international community to poverty eradication and to the environmental improvements that are fundamental in assuring and enhancing gains for the overall well-being and economic development of the poor.

The IUCN would like the United Nations to consider providing further mandates on broad questions regarding environmental issues. The agreements reached during informal consultations held during the sixtieth session of the General Assembly regarding the institutional framework for the

environmental activities of the United Nations system, included suggestions for enhanced coordination, improved policy guidance, strengthened scientific knowledge, enhanced treaty compliance and better integration of environmental activities in the economic development framework at an operational level. The IUCN increases the implementation of these ideas in support of potential mandates on broad environmental interests.

Moreover, the IUCN anticipates the future recommendations of the Secretary-General's High-level Panel on System-wide Coherence, specifically relating to environmental matters such as water resources, desertification, trade, biodiversity, natural resources, climate change and deforestation. The IUCN appreciates the recognition of the importance of strengthening ties with civil society and hopes that these suggestions will be taken up by States and organizations in their programmes of work.

We believe that environmental sustainability is one of the main pillars of the global fight against poverty — that poverty eradication can only be achieved if the world's ecosystems, which sustain people's well-being, are conserved and properly managed. The experience of the IUCN and many other organizations involved in the conservation and development of communities clearly indicates that there is a direct relationship between the health of ecosystems and the opportunities of the impoverished to increase their food security, improve their health, build assets, reduce risks and have more secure lives. Conversely land degradation, desertification, pollution, increasing greenhouse gas emissions and unequal access to water and productive ecosystems are all associated with a decline in human well-being. Sustainable development can be achieved only through an increased awareness of the intrinsic necessity of environmental preservation.

The IUCN believes that in order to truly implement a global partnership for development environmental interests should be fully considered within United Nations policies and processes in support of economic development. The IUCN, having a membership of 42 States, is the only body possessing and able to contribute to the scientific background and expertise of the United Nations in the field of environmental conservation. Our work on improving coastal ecosystems, our water and nature initiatives, the work that we do on forests and landscapes, our

fisheries strategies and our recent conference on biodiversity in European development cooperation all highlight the very real value of our work.

We would like the General Assembly to keep a continual focus on the necessity of preserving our planet and the richness of its human and natural resources. The IUCN has a deep commitment to working to make conservation and the management of natural resources more effective in addressing poverty. We stand ready to support the Assembly's efforts in this regard.

The President: We have heard the last speaker on the debate on this item.

May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization, contained in document A/61/1 and corrigendum 1?

It was so decided.

The President: I call now on those delegations wishing to make statements on the decision the Assembly has just taken.

Mr. Dugan (United States of America): Indeed, the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization, document A/61/1, addresses a subject area as comprehensive as any report's. There are many things in the report on which we could comment, as others have done in today's consideration.

The Assembly just "took note" of the Secretary-General's report. The effect of taking note by the Assembly should not be construed, as is commonly understood, as formal endorsement of the report's content, including its proposals. In particular, my delegation draws the Assembly's attention to paragraph 24 of the report. The United States does not agree with the Secretary-General's proposal in paragraph 24 to add or develop additional targets with regard to the Millennium Development Goals. The Millennium Development Goals were just defined by the 2005 World Summit as the development goals and objectives that had been agreed upon at the Millennium Summit. Those goals were defined by the World Summit last year and should not be changed.

Mr. Steeghs (Netherlands): By taking note of the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (A/61/1), the General Assembly has endorsed the recommendation of the Secretary-General to incorporate four new targets into the framework used to follow up on the Millennium Declaration. As the Secretary-General states in his report on the work of the Organization, those targets were agreed upon by our leaders at the 2005 World Summit. In our opinion, the Secretary-General had therefore already been given the mandate to include these commitments in the aforementioned framework.

There is international consensus that the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are the global compact for development. They constitute the framework within which cooperation with our partner countries takes place. They represent a partnership of countries determined to create an environment which is conducive to development and the elimination of poverty.

In order to assess and monitor progress towards the MDGs, these goals are operationalized in terms of targets and indicators. The goals, targets and indicators should form a comprehensive, coherent and consistent monitoring framework for the MDGs. We have always held the view that the monitoring framework could and should be further improved. We believe that the inclusion of the four new targets as recommended by the Secretary-General will significantly strengthen the framework. Full and productive employment and decent work, universal access to reproductive health, universal access to treatment for HIV/AIDS and reduction of loss of biodiversity are crucial for achieving the MDGs.

We therefore strongly support the recommendation of the Secretary-General and hope that work will start soon to select the appropriate indicators.

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 102?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 5.15 p.m.